

Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers and Ministers of Defence
of France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain

Paris, 15 November 2012

1. We, Foreign Affairs Ministers and Ministers of Defence of France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain, met today in Paris to confirm our readiness to foster an ambitious European policy in the field of security and defence. Much has been achieved in the last ten years. The start of three new missions this year is proof of the EU's ability to act. However, threats to security, including in the European neighbourhood, call for decisive actions. Europeans must take share of responsibility to respond more actively to the challenges ahead in order to guarantee Europe's security.
2. The particular strength of the Common Security and Defence Policy lies in the comprehensive approach to crisis management. By mobilizing all its civilian and military instruments, the European Union must be able to deal with complex, multi-actor and multidimensional crises, while at the same time increase the efficiency of its missions and operations.
3. The ongoing reform of the crisis management procedures and the forthcoming EEAS review should enable the EU to act timely and effectively on the whole spectrum of crisis management actions, in close cooperation with international and regional organizations as well as partner countries. While committed to the implementation of FAC conclusions on CSDP of December 2011 and July 2012, we are convinced that the EU must set up, within a framework yet to-be-defined, true civilian-military structures to plan and conduct missions and operations and build a higher degree of synergy between the EEAS and the Commission in order to ensure their success.
4. The European Union should be able and willing to shoulder its responsibilities in areas where its security interests and values are at stake. Fulfilling its commitments to security and stability in the areas where the EU is already operationally engaged and launching new crisis management missions and operations are the most concrete and indispensable CSDP contributions to that end.
5. We share the view that providing support to regional organisations and local authorities to strengthen stability in ungoverned or fragile areas reinforces the security of EU citizens and interests. In this spirit, the EU strengthened its engagement in the Horn of Africa, by continuing the support to governance and capacity building for Somalia, and in the Sahel, namely in Niger, within a comprehensive and regional approach. We encourage our partners to enhance efforts for a political solution to the Malian crisis, as well as to contribute to a possible training mission to support the Malian armed forces, in line with the Foreign Affairs Council's conclusions of the 15th of October. We equally encourage the EU to stand ready, as recalled in the FAC conclusions of July 2012, to provide assistance to support the new Libyan Authorities.

6. Concerning the Balkans, another key area for our security, we need to discuss with partners the way the EU could optimise its active presence and further contribute to the normalisation of the region. The EU has also to remain engaged and involved in stabilisation and conflict resolution efforts in Georgia. With regard to Afghanistan, we will have to ensure continued EU engagement for a strong and efficient Afghan national police, in coordination with other international actors.

7. The Europeans must have the capabilities to meet their ambitions in the area of security and defence. We should show preparedness to hold available, train, deploy and sustain in theatre the necessary civilian and military means, including rapid response instruments such as the EU Battlegroups.

8. Further development of adequate strategic capabilities, in full transparency and coherence with NATO is essential. The efforts undertaken so far in *ad hoc* formats among Europeans have already enabled significant pooling and sharing projects. To strengthen this cooperation, efforts bringing together two or more European countries, in a pragmatic way, particularly on high added-value capacities (e.g. space, ballistic-missile defence, drones, air-to-air refuelling, airlift capacities, medical support to operations, software defined radio etc.) will remain a major issue. We should remain committed to work together among ourselves and with other interested partners, in order to foster existing and future pooling and sharing projects to improve the availability and efficiency of our common high value capabilities.

9. The EU Member States should continue strengthening those force-enablers and force-multipliers which grant the ability to deploy and sustain military actions over long distances and long periods and more balanced burden-sharing in the transatlantic community. This would be a brave step towards a “smart” and “shared” approach to defence cuts. Better coordination between national planning processes would optimize the available resources and maximize the cooperation among Member States.

10. The EU must continue to play a major role in innovation and technological progress and keep its defence capabilities and skills. To that end we consider Europe must strive to boost its efforts in the area of R&T and enhance synergies between Member states defence related R&T activities and using EDA in a facilitating role.

In this regard, the better use of the opportunities offered by the European framework program for research and technology, in particular concerning dual use technologies should be further explored. To this end, all involved actors should have a constructive dialogue on the preparation of the coming Framework Programme HORIZON 2020. The involved actors should also carefully analyze how the strengthening of the European defence industry could be supported, taking into account the existing legal framework and its political implications.

11. The severe defence budget restrictions and the lack of new programmes, concurrent with-reduced R&T budgets, may reduce engineering workforce and might lead to a loss in the EU defence capabilities by damaging the European Defence and Technological Industrial Base (EDTIB). We should work towards a competent, competitive and sustainable EDTIB. These objectives imply a greater EU cross-border cooperation and increased synergies.

12. We are willing to contribute to this effort together with all other European partners wishing to strengthen the capacities necessary for European civil and military crisis management. For instance, the European Air Transport Command (EATC), appropriately adapted and extended to the participation of additional member states, could constitute a real step forward for the prompt and shared capabilities of air transport and air to air refuelling, and is an innovative model that could be applied to the use of other capabilities. In coming months, we would like these discussions to foster cooperation on structural projects, in order to help strengthening the culture of cooperation in Europe.

13. We welcome the initiatives of President BARROSO and President VAN ROMPUY for the European Council session, which in 2013 will be called upon to confirm our European ambition on the Common Security and Defence Policy and to provide the necessary guidance on further strategic priorities, inter alia to strengthen the competitiveness of the European defence industry. These initiatives should receive an adequate political support at the highest level, in close relation with the High Representative, and be considered as part of a larger process towards further European political integration. We need more Europe also on defence matters. We are committed to work together in this direction.
