

Position Paper: Kingdom of Denmark

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Introduction

There are two issues before us today, both relating to the future of common security for the European Union (“EU”). Given the rise of geopolitical tensions, from the unpredictability of state behaviour to more hard-pressing issues such as Brexit, it is clear that many of EU members fear the emergence of military conflict. In response to this, some member states have proposed that the establishment of a European Defence Community (“EDC”), and even the creation of a European Army (“EA”), is necessary to EU’s security.

Denmark agrees that security and defence are essential for the progress of EU. However, it believes that the utmost priority of the EU should remain the pursuit of greater economic cooperation, allowing instead the hard security concerns to be dealt with through its existing military and defense alliances with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (“NATO”) rather than creating an independent army.

Issue 1: The future of a genuine European Defence Community

The Lisbon Treaty has granted the European Parliament much-needed flexibility, particularly in the fields of foreign policy oversight and budgetary scrutiny. Nevertheless, many provisions of the Treaty, designed to provide a boost to foreign, security and defence policies (“CFSP”), remain non-implemented owing to a lack of political support. These stem from the fears of some EU Member States of the creation of a ‘two-speed Europe’ and loss of control over these fields in favour of the EU institutions.

In 2018, only four out of the 27 European NATO member states met the 2% symbolic threshold for defense spending under the CDSP: Estonia, Greece, Lithuania and the UK. This reflects a lack of will to dedicate resources to an established agenda. Whether it is due to difficulties of unanimous decision-making or the delays in implementation of crucial policies, it is clear that European states are unable to fully commit to one single agenda. Given that an

EDC requires a higher level of commitment to defense from member states, it is difficult to imagine the future with an EDC.

Moreover, it is Denmark's position that a common foreign policy, in any real sense of the term, cannot succeed because it is contrary to the EU's inherent identity as an organisation of sovereign states. There is no more fundamental component of state sovereignty than the authority to decide how to deal with those outside the borders. When a country yields its power to make foreign policy, it surrenders its most elemental sovereignty. Thus, if the vision of a common EU foreign policy is to be realized, the responsibility for conducting diplomatic and military affairs is to be moved to the supranational level. In other words, the EU's member states must, by definition, agree to relinquish their sovereignty. As such, Denmark believes that the development of a common EU foreign policy is not only problematic in theory, but also impossible in practice.

Denmark became a member of the EU in 1973 together with the United Kingdom, which has always been considered an important security and trade partner. While Denmark's membership in the Union has been deeply beneficial not just to the country but its people, it is also important to remember that this membership has always been premised on the promise of *economic* cooperation in an intergovernmental framework, and nothing beyond that.

Denmark's intentions is most clearly reflected in the *four* Danish opt-outs adopted after the Treaty of Maastricht was signed in 1991. In the national referendum of 1992, Denmark exempted itself from four pillars of the Treaty: Union citizenship, the third phase of the European Monetary Union (EMU), the common justice and police affairs, and the common defense policy. This was subsequently also outlined in the Edinburgh Agreement in the same year.

This sentiment is still strong today, as was reflected in the 2015 national referendum—more than 50% voted *against* altering Denmark's current justice and home affairs opt-out. While home affairs is indeed different from the CFSP, it clearly shows the current reluctance to relinquish control on crucial matters such as security, and the adoption of EU rules instead.

At the core of Danish concerns in regards of the EU therefore is the development of a political Union towards a direction away from intergovernmentalism and state sovereignty.

Denmark feels that the CFSP, common citizenship, and a common currency are a few of the largest threats to Danish sovereignty. This fear is very much mirrored in the opt-outs. The current understanding in Denmark is that the US and NATO are the cornerstones of hard security, whereas the EU represents its softer needs.

Issue 2: The creation of an European Army

Another issue before us today is the possibility of the creation of an EA. This suggestion is an elevation of the current CFSP and Permanent Structured Cooperation (“PESCO”) agreements between the member states in response to the rise in global security tensions. As mentioned, these include the potential loss of one of our powerful allies in the upcoming Brexit, and the perceived unpredictability of superpowers such as the US.

Denmark recognises that there are indeed relevant issues regarding EU’s security. However, it argues that they are not significant enough to justify a creation of an EA separate from the current long-standing alliance that EU has with NATO.

First, while Denmark acknowledges Germany’s concerns that the EU needs an independent defense in light of rising threats, it bears reminding that NATO has been the official bedrock of EU’s defense since 2002. It has however served bigger states like Germany, France and Denmark since the end of World War II. Today, 22 of our member states are NATO allies who have been actively contributing to the NATO budget each year. More importantly, the EU’s participation is not merely a passive membership; the EU states have led several missions in the Balkans and even Afghanistan, which would have been impossible without the NATO army. Launching an EA now would be shaking the foundation of the EU’s strategic and military alliance with the rest of the world, one which we have spent decades trying to build.

Second, it is highly unlikely that EA can exist complementarily to the NATO, contrary to what Germany suggests. In fact, Denmark is of the opinion that an independent EA may only work arouse hostility from NATO. NATO’s role has gained more importance over the years, especially with rising geopolitical tensions, as a *mediator* and common force between the two great powers in the world. Given the already tense trade relations between the EU and US, any sign of departure from NATO will only strain these relations even further. Moreover, it is worthwhile to mention that US has always been the largest contributor to NATO and consistently committed to providing the EU member states with security and protection for

decades, in a time where the world was the most unstable. By channelling EU resources to an EA, the EU will effectively be turning away from years of strategic partnership with the US and contribute to the very threat that EU fears— antagonism.

It should be made clear that Denmark shares the EU's concern that the US' actions are not always predictable under its current leadership, and the change in US foreign policy (one that puts America First) may seem threatening. However, it does not agree that they are no longer a reliable *military* ally. As mentioned, the US has always been the primary contributor to the NATO, which is most of the EU member states' primary defense alliance. While military autonomy is desirable, Denmark strongly feels that the question of necessity should be the EU's utmost priority.

Lastly, it is indeed difficult to be certain of what the future will bring, and whether pressing issues will urge it to substantively change its current defense policies. However, Denmark's current position will maintain its defense opt-out from the EU and will continue to commit to greater cooperation of the Union within the confines of it, whether in security or other matters. It has signed initiatives such as the European Intervention Initiative (“**E2I**”) in 2018 with nine other EU members to enhance military cooperation between the states, and will continue to work with other member states towards the common goal of security.