



In response to the European Council Meeting on 26-27 April

Paris, 19 April 2019

French Republic – Position on the Future of the European Defence

I. Introduction

Security challenges of the 21st century come in many forms. They can be tangible and of extremely destructive to lives and our physical worlds such as armed conflicts and terrorist attacks; or, they can even be intangible but of equally devastating to our values, economy and society such as extremism and economic crisis. With environmental degradation and ongoing global warming, nation states and international order will also face ecological disasters and health crisis. As a French proverb goes-

Qui voit les nuages arrive, aura son parapluie pour ne pas se faire mouiller

- meaning that who sees the clouds arrive, will have his umbrella not to get wet, France firmly believes what a well-prepared and -orchestrated EU security and defence community means and can bring to us Europeans; there will be foresightedness, readiness, proactivity, confidence, and autonomy, even in the midst of darkness.

Security and defence are fundamental to France and to the European integration project. For centuries, France has always put security among its priorities and still remains a leader and a driving force in the field of the EU security and defence, e.g. France has been one of the founding members who proactively pushed the formation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Now France is ready to push forward the frontier of European Defence together with other like-minded Member States.

II. Why more deepen EU cooperation is needed in the area of security and defence

Looking inwards, France is aware that the initial objective of the CSDP layout was not to build a European Defence Community with an integrated European Union armament and military units. However, in the lack of an integrated security and defence system there can be inadequate common decision-making and action on the EU-level. This, in turn, triggers issues including duplication in spending and investment, misalignment in security commitment and military action among Member States, and inefficiency in budget-planning, decision-making and military practising. The EU cannot continue to rely on member states' "**voluntarily pledges**" to troops, machinery and assets. According to the past experiences working within the CSDP model, France feels that what we regarded as "common" is not truly common, which compensates our efforts to becoming an independent civilian power. A genuine autonomous and common security and defence apparatus requires stronger commitment from Member States and deepened cooperation among them.

Along with the traditional security concerns, new security challenges within and outside the European territory also raises the bar for CSDP. Since 2000, France and Europe have undergone significant social changes and have experienced shifts in our security concerns. In the era of post-globalisation, all forms of extremism and terrorism have grown their power from an increasing number of followers and via an ever-growing cyber space, which is another place where organised crimes raged.

Furthermore, with BREXIT in sight, the EU is going to face the impact of missing a heavyweight military power and its financial contribution. Additionally, France is going to be the only European Member State who holds a Permanent Seat at the United Nations Security Council. This presents uncertainties to our future in the area of security and defence. On the bright side, the United Kingdom's withdrawal will also clear the path for a further deepened European integration.

Looking outwards, The United State's potential withdraw from both the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty and NATO has shadowed the future of these organizations and hence put its EU allies' security at risk. Against the backdrop of the United States' increasing intention of retreating from the global security and defence arena, the EU should be alarmed towards the future potential degrading of NATO. Hereon, France argues that Europe should reduce its heavy reliance on Washington.

Our efforts will increase our contributions toward NATO and demonstrate our commitment to safeguard democratic values and ensure peace worldwide, apart from which, it will also convey a strong political signal towards our citizens and the outside world that governments of the EU Member States are taking a concrete, holistic plan to build up common security and defence.

III. Policy Recommendation

Against the backdrop of a broader range of threats in the European Union's immediate neighbourhood and beyond, the Union should prepare and habituate itself to fit into the role of an independent, major security actor on both the regional and the international scale. **France is determined to work toward a genuine European Defence Community together with the other willing Member States, as thus France will continue its efforts to strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).** The current inadequate reformed CSDP is in great need of a better functioning to operate. In light of the Articles 42 (6) and 46 outlined in the Treaty of the European Union (TEU), as well as Protocol 10, the emergence of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) offers a concrete, pragmatic and operational manner to guide the Europeans to shoulder their responsibilities to work toward a better functioning of the CSDP and hence a genuine European Defence Community.

France believes PESCO can be the cornerstone of the future European Defence Community, where more inclusive and ambitious cooperation can develop upon. France feels that the evolution of PESCO offers the Europeans a bottom-up approach to build the European Defence Community brick by brick, in a gradual, sensible and realist way. So far, there are 34 projects under PESCO covering areas from training, land, maritime, air, cyber, to joint enablers. France acknowledges that the aim of PESCO is to fulfil the capability shortfalls regarding the CSDP objectives and priorities. However, France also considers PESCO can offer an opportunity for the Europeans to rediscover the 1952's ambition of institutional integration of a pan-European defence system. Additionally, as a 2017 Eurobarometer opinion poll showed that 75% of Europeans were in support of the CSDP while 55% of the participants even desired a European Army, France believes that the proposal may also meet the public demand. Hereon, **France proposes the formation of a European Army in the context of PESCO.**

France supports the current PESCO progress, agreeing that the current EU-internal security and defence development strategy should focus on capability building. However, **France also insists that institutional integration – an integrated European Defence Community should be the ultimate goal of PESCO.** The creation of a true European Army would be the vital outcome and a robust manifestation of a genuine European Defence Community. They are inseparable, interrelated and mutually reinforcing, leading to Europe's ever-strengthening ability to act effectively and autonomously. **To achieve the goal, France proposes the following solutions in the context of PESCO:**

- i. In light of the President Donald Tusk's appeal of the creation of European Army, on the basis of the Article 42 (6) of the TEU and Protocol 10, referring to the mutual

Franco-German defence clause in the Treaty of Aachen, **Member States who are able and willing to create a European Army that would report and be deployed by the European Union shall:**

- Undertake the creation of an integrated military force among themselves as a medium-term objective of a 5 years' timeline
- Establish targeted combat-ready force either at the national level or as a component of multinational force groups under the direct supervision of European Union, structured as battle groups those are capable to act within a period of 5 to 30 days
- Contribute to extending the Franco-German joint defence cooperation project into a multilateral, European Union-wide, inclusive and ambitious cooperation, towards the aim of a joint, coherent full spectrum force package and make the capabilities available to Member States for national and multinational missions and operations
- Cooperate closely within the systems of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the United Nations as a major civilian power who strengthen these organizations

ii. **Prior to the realization of a European Army, Member States participating in PESCO shall continue to fulfil their commitments to develop defence capabilities. By doing so, the participating Member States shall:**

- Pool and share their armament, avoid duplication
- Increase joint defence spending by:
 - a) scaling up the European Union co-financing to PESCO projects from the 20% to 30% - for prototypes
 - b) removing the barriers to investment in military capabilities
 - c) bringing a defence component on the agenda of the next Multiannual Financial Framework
- Advocate greater powers to the European Defence Agency to promote a European Union-wide approach to armament
- Support and strengthen the European defence industry to stimulate growth, innovation and to improve competitiveness, most of all, to toughen our defence industrial muscle for the future true European Army.