

**Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security
Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy
Dublin Castle – 25th March, 2013**

**Address by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence,
Alan Shatter, T.D.**

High Representative, Parliamentarians, distinguished guests, let me first of all welcome you to Dublin Castle, for what I understand, is only the second Inter-Parliamentary conference on Foreign, Security and Defence Policy.

I am honoured to have been invited to address your conference. My address today is primarily concerned with the upcoming European Council on Defence in December 2013.

This European Council meeting will include a thematic discussion on CSDP and Defence issues. It is interesting to note that the last such discussion took place five years ago – in 2008. As such, the upcoming European Council meeting affords all of us a significant and relatively unique opportunity to place EU defence issues centre stage and to consider the role of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in the presence of Heads of State and Government of our respective countries.

Since December last, Member States have been actively addressing this topic through a range of fora, together with the development of a number of discussion papers on this topic. There was already a discussion at the Defence Policy Directors meetings in January and March and a discussion also took place at the informal Defence Ministerial meeting in Dublin in February, which I chaired on behalf of the High Representative, Baroness Ashton.

The topic is also on the Agenda for the upcoming EDA Steering Board and Defence Ministers' meeting in April. A number of think-tanks are to report later this year and we also look forward to the report from the Defence Task Force within the Commission. Clearly the issue will not fall through a lack of consideration or discussion among the Defence community and other stakeholders.

At the informal Defence Ministerial we had a very interesting and insightful discussion on the topic. We concluded our discussions by agreeing that the issue of preparing for the European Council would be a common thread for the year's work on CSDP. A number of common themes emerged from the discussions, including that:

- resources would remain in short supply – necessitating Pooling and Sharing;
- there is a need for a clearly articulated political commitment to the deployment of Battlegroups - if not we need to question the basis for them;
- We need to develop a functional toolbox of military capabilities including enablers and niche capabilities which can be deployed in support of CSDP missions; and
- We need to significantly improve decision making cycles so as the EU can respond where and when required - the experience from the Mali mission would suggest that, while individual Member States could respond rapidly, the decision making process within the EU had been found wanting.

Also, in preparation for the European Council, our Italian colleagues held a seminar earlier this month in Rome, which I understand was very well attended and covered a wide range of issues in the defence domain.

Throughout our Presidency of the Council and the upcoming Lithuanian Presidency this subject will be a significant priority. The Irish Presidency is committed to supporting and facilitating preparations for the European Council and we will hold a seminar on the subject in Dublin during May.

Member States and decision makers, have a significant role to play in both the preparations for and in the Council itself. I think it is true to say that in the defence domain, individual Member States will have their own national priorities that they would like to see discussed, planned and implemented as a result of this Council. However, we need to be both realistic and willing to compromise on the range of issues that will be considered. Obviously not all our national objectives can be achieved. The most important objective is to ensure that the debate is strategic, worthwhile,

rational and produces deliverables and direction on the way forward for the Union's Common Security and Defence Policy and for Defence more generally.

We are all Europeans, we all have a stake in the security of Europe and it is incumbent on all of us to ensure that the European Council on Defence is a success. This is an opportunity that needs to be grasped. Our objective must be to ensure a safer and more secure Europe, as well as a safer and more secure World.

As you are all aware, three significant themes to be considered have already been identified by the European Council. These are:

- increase the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP;
- enhance the development of defence capabilities; and
- strengthen Europe's defence industry.

I do not intend to delve deeply into these themes themselves but would like to look at them in the broadest sense relative to CSDP.

I will start by stating what I have said on a number of occasions, which I believe is worth repeating. **In today's rapidly changing world our values and interests are being continually challenged and we need to be able to respond to those challenges.** The threats that we are now facing such as, transnational terrorism, organised crime, cyber-crime, proliferation in weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, failing States etc., are real and substantial threats to our communities and to international peace and security. In our globalised world, these threats have become more difficult to address and are more interrelated. As we endeavour to tackle or indeed overcome these many challenges, such as failing States and regional conflicts, this will require us to strengthen both our response and our capacity to respond.

There is a need to increase the effectiveness and visibility of CSDP. However, the greatest requirement is to ensure its effectiveness and impact in the maintenance of international peace and security so as to guarantee

the security of the EU's citizens and the promotion of its interests, both within and outside the Union. In accordance with our values and interests, we also need to safeguard those who cannot defend themselves and ensure that we have the requisite defence capabilities to this end where these are required.

This is the bottom line when it comes to CSDP, regardless of all other issues and constraints. CSDP is required, needed and must be used to help protect those who are vulnerable, defenceless and in need of security.

This brings me to the second theme which is enhancing the development of defence capabilities. We are all aware of the instances in the recent past whereby the EU has had to rely on partners to facilitate our actions and reactions to world events. For a region that is one of the most technologically advanced in the world, has a population of over 500 million, standing Defence Forces of approximately 1.7 million and has significant military hardware, it seems unbelievable that we cannot supply some of the basic military capabilities that are required.

One recent instance is a primary example of this. I am, of course, referring to the lack of a MEDEVAC helicopter for the EU Training Mission in Mali. We all recognised the need to intervene in Mali, to provide training to the Malian Armed Forces but we could not produce a single MEDEVAC helicopter to look after our own personnel.

I would like to see the European Council on Defence result in each Member State looking critically at the resources required to assist in such missions and operations and then perhaps specialising in such niche capabilities to be called on when such instances arise. Maybe it is a case that each Member State should be providing a particular capability that can be used by the EU, in response to International crises.

The EU are currently developing military capabilities through a range of initiatives, which include the Pooling and Sharing initiative, bilateral, multilateral or regional cooperative arrangements. Whatever approach is adopted in the development of military capabilities, we need to ensure that we are in a position to launch a CSDP mission in a timely and efficient manner.

We must overcome the situation where a delay in launching a CDSP operation is due solely to internal delays in assigning resources, both troops and equipment from within the readily available resources and member State capabilities. More importantly, we need to ensure that there is the **political will** amongst all concerned to make these capabilities available when and where needed in support of international peacekeeping and crisis management operations. In this regard, there is a requirement to advance the concept of International Peacekeeping and Crisis Management as a common good which contributes to all of our security.

The third strand is to strengthen Europe's Defence industry. In the development of military capabilities, we need to examine innovative and cost effective means of generating these capabilities. In this regard, the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base makes a major contribution to the security and defence of EU Member States and is an important prerequisite for an effective Common Security and Defence Policy.

Heads of State and Government acknowledged this last December when they said there is a requirement to strengthen Europe's defence industry, mainly by "developing a more integrated, sustainable, innovate and competitive European defence technological and industrial base," developing greater synergies between civilian and military research and development and finally by promoting "a well-functioning defence market open to small and medium-sized enterprises".

To this end, I acknowledge the work undertaken by the Commission Task Force on Defence Industries and Markets who are exploring different policy options available to the Commission to strengthen the European defence equipment market and further enhance the competitiveness of the defence industry. It is also a very welcome development, to see that the Task Force operates in full collaboration with the European Defence Agency and the European External Action Service. We need this coordinated approach to ensure we avoid duplication internally within the EU and realise the synergies and economies which can be achieved from acting together.

The challenge for us now is to ensure that Europe retains a strong, competitive and innovative industrial base to support capability needs in the medium and longer-term. The varied range of capabilities/technologies

being developed by industries across Europe can in many instances have a civilian and defence application – dual use goods.

We need to work very closely with all parts of the Commission, so as to ensure that we collectively strengthen CSDP efforts – both in the civilian and defence domains. This, in turn, will support jobs and growth in our economies.

Now is the time for us to make a difference. It is up to us to ensure that our Heads of State and Government are acutely aware of the opportunity that the European Council on Defence in December presents to us and to Europe as a whole for our security, our place in the world and for development, jobs and growth.