

Background notes – Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the CFSP and the CSDP – 5 & 6 September 2015

Workshop 3: Follow-up on implementation of conclusions of the June European Council on defence

I. Background

In addition to migration and the situation in Greece, the European Council of 25-26 June 2015 discussed a review of the **European security strategy** and took stock of on-going work in the **fight against terrorism**.

This new security strategy must take into account the new security challenges which the EU is facing. Indeed, the current strategy which was developed back in 2003 does no longer reflect the European reality. In recent years, security has significantly deteriorated in the European neighborhood. The crises have become more complex and more intense and the EU has to face challenges like hybrid warfare, cyber threat or risk of terrorist attacks.

II. The European Council conclusions on defence

At the European Council of 25-26 June, EU leaders agreed that the EU will take action in three interconnected areas:

- a) Firstly, the Council conclusions state that *“further to the Commission’s ‘**European Agenda on Security**’ and the Council conclusions of 16 June 2015, work will be taken forward on the **renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy**”*.

Indeed, in June 2014, the European Council asked the Commission to review the EU’s Internal Security Strategy adopted in 2010 and to update it by mid-year 2015. In April 2015, the Commission adopted a **New European Agenda on Security 2015-2020** to support better cooperation between Member States in: 1) preventing **terrorism** and countering **radicalisation**; 2) fighting **organised crime**; 3) fighting **cybercrime**.

The Justice and Home Affairs Council of 16 June 2015 debated the implementation of the measures contained in the **Declaration on the fight against terrorism** published in February 2015, in which the Heads of State and Government called to adopt “in emergency” a “robust and efficient directive on a **European Passenger Name Records (PNR)** with solid data protection safeguards”.

Further, the European Council of June 2015 underlined that *“the full implementation of the **orientations on the fight against terrorism** agreed at the February 2015 meeting **remains a priority**”*.

Indeed, following the terrorist attacks in Paris, Foreign Affairs Ministers discussed **new measures against terrorism**, some of which included an external dimension, during their meeting of 19 January 2015. They agreed that action should be undertaken in the following areas:

- Improving the **exchange of safety-related information** with partner countries;
- Strengthening **cooperation with Arab and Mediterranean countries**;
- Increase the efforts to resolve crises and open conflicts.

This debate continued at the session of the Foreign Affairs Council on 9 February 2015, mentioned in the conclusions of the June European Council. During the February session, the Ministers **adopted conclusions on the fight against terrorism**. They agreed on the need for an external action, considering it necessary to include:

- Deeper dialogue on security issues with **third countries**;
- Promote cooperation with the **UN** and other global and regional initiatives;
- Address the current crises and conflicts.

On 16 March 2015, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted the **EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the Da'esh threat**.

- b) The second point of the conclusions of 25-26 June on defence provides for that the **High Representative/Vice-President** *"will continue the process of strategic reflection with a view to preparing an **EU global strategy on foreign and security policy** in close cooperation with Member States, to be submitted to the European Council by June 2016"*.

The High Representative/Vice-President intends to encourage **a closer participation of Member States** during the discussions, so that they can feel included in the development of the strategy. The goal is to formulate viable ideas, build consensus, and to establish links - first and foremost within the EU, but also with allies and partners.

- c) Finally, the last point of the conclusions of 25-26 June 2015 on defence underlines the need to invest in **European defence** in order to face a security environment which has dramatically changed, in line with the European Council conclusions of December 2013 and the Council conclusions of 18 May 2015.

The June Conclusions state that work shall continue *"on a more effective, visible and result-oriented **CSDP**, the further development of both civilian and military capabilities, and the strengthening on Europe's defence industry, including SMEs"*.

In its conclusions, the European Council recalls the need for:

- the Member States to allocate a **sufficient level of expenditure for defence** and the need to make the most effective use of the resources ;

- the EU budget to ensure appropriate funding for the preparatory action on CSDP-related research, paving the way for a possible future **defence research and technology programme**;
- fostering greater and more systematic **European defence cooperation** to deliver key capabilities, including EU funds;
- mobilising EU instruments to help counter **hybrid threats**;
- intensifying **partnerships**, namely with the UN, NATO, OSCE and African Union;
- empowering and enabling partners to **prevent and manage crises**, including through concrete projects of capacity building with a flexible geographic scope.

Some points for discussion:

- Was the European Council ambitious enough in its implementation of the EU's security and defence commitments, in particular those stemming from the European Council of December 2013?
- Have the current expenditure and cooperation levels of Member States for a common defence policy brought about adequate capacities in order to address the challenges faced by the EU? What actions have to be taken in order to improve these capacities?
- Which further efforts can be made in order to support a European defence technological and industrial base?
- How to promote the use of Treaty provisions such as the "permanent structured cooperation" and "entrusting of a CSDP mission or operation to a group of Member States"?