

STUDY GROUP ON THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

Working Group 9 & 10 A ROADMAP TOWARDS A JOINT EUROPEAN ARMED FORCE

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I INTRODUCTION

- 1 The European Union should act as an independent geopolitical actor, pursuing a common vision through integrated resources and shared responsibilities. This paper outlines the creation, for the purposes of common defence, of a European army, here named the European Armed Force (EAF). This latter would be the operational arm of a better-integrated EU foreign and security policy. The hypothesis is that rather than reinforcing existing cooperative structures like PESCO and CSDP, the European Union needs a new highly-integrated security system, a new pillar of European integration here defined as the European Defence Union (EDU). Placed at the interplay between foreign and defence policy, EDU would regulate the European Armed Force and thereby enforce the Union with a full spectrum of advanced military capabilities, high availability and adaptability to present and future threats in multiple changing scenarios. The introduction of EDU may allow the EU to carry out global strategy, common defence, conflict prevention and peacekeeping operations at both regional and international levels.
- 2 This open call for Treaty reform stems from the need to tackle the traditional limitations of the EU defence and foreign policy. Indeed, the European Union has been struggling to develop an awareness of itself as a global power. Since the end of the Cold War, the EU has developed as a peaceful, multilevel governance with a low degree of integration in the area of security and intelligence and a much higher influence in key sectors like trade, public

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diplomacy and human rights promotion. However, this soft attitude towards the EU's external action presents limits and shortcomings. After the accomplishment of a Single Market and currency, European countries cannot escape from the creation of a common, responsible, credible and independent foreign and defence policy. The lack of a common vision and coordinated action in times of crisis and conflict prevents the full potential of the EU as a full-fledged political community.

- 3 A new defence policy framework should shield European citizens from external crises and shocks that have shattered global order in the last few years. Peace and stability can no longer be taken for granted in Europe and elsewhere. Security threats and challenges are complex and transcend borders. The Russian invasion of Ukraine, the crisis in Gaza, the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, and the civil war in Libya are epoch-making crises posing threats to the safety and freedom of all Europeans. Tension in Africa, the Middle and Far East is mounting and many countries are investing hard in armaments. Great power competition is not just paralysing the global multilateral system, but it might also cause the splitting of the EU itself. Europeans must no longer observe those phenomena in a contemplative way, crawling into bed and pulling the covers over their heads. It is time for planning and merging: the member states are asked to pursue a more far-reaching global strategy by integrating part of their material and human forces and energies. EDU serves to transcend the limits of the cooperative and cautious approach, without distorting the peaceful, consensual and plural character of EU foreign and security policy-making.
- 4 Among the many options for renewal and reform of the Common Security and Defence Policy, the idea of establishing EAF within EDU is one of the most difficult to achieve. Intergovernmental cooperation can produce faster results. Enforcing the interoperability of military assets, deepening the EU defence capability-building or improving the solidarity of member states would make Europe more secure and cohesive even without a Treaty change. These steps forward, however significant, would not be enough to transform the Union into an autonomous and influential security provider.
- 5 The paper is structured in six parts, plus the introduction. The first section provides a brief and broad reflection on the driving principles of EU foreign

conduct. A critical account of the current state of EU positioning in world affairs through CSDP, NATO and the United Nations comes thereafter. The third section seeks to illustrate how to save national armies in an integrated system, moving beyond the clash between intergovernmental and supranational methods. Then, in the fourth part, the features of EDU and EAF, including their institutional outline and relations with other EU authorities, are described. The analysis ends with a tentative roadmap towards the creation of the European Armed Forces by the end of the legislative term 2024-2029, highlighting the main goals of EU security policy.

II. PEACE, INDEPENDENCE, AND STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

II.1 Peace As The Core Value

6 The old days of the Union as a political dwarf and a military worm are gone. As members of an economic giant, Europeans are now in the position of demonstrating that we can pursue a global strategy without watering down the core values of the Union. Soft and hard power go hand in hand and a balance between the principles of peace and independence is possible.

7 Independence means strategic thinking and risk management, i.e. the capacity to elaborate and run ambitious economic, political and even military policies, with or without the approval of allied third countries. A higher degree of collective independence is needed as long as we recognise that some external threats cannot be countered with soft power's toolbox. Operating within a turbulent and fluid world, EU foreign policy should count on a credible military or political capacity to contain or deter an external threat.

8 On the other hand, the question of peace is not just a theoretical problem. It is a practical necessity. Only a strong, united and supportive Europe will be able to face the conflicting forces that will inevitably be released, on a global scale, as a consequence of great power competition. Representing itself as the paradigm for overcoming the murderous intra-European conflicts of the past centuries, the EU has a normative vocation to spread peace as a value in itself. The essence of the whole EU project is not the defence of a specific cultural, racial, or religious identity – as if to continue to mark the superiority of the white man or the Christian religion over the rest of mankind – but a specific method for the resolution of conflicts between states and societies.

- 9 Since peace has always been the *raison d'être* of the whole integration process, there is no room for a belligerent attitude nor an arms race in the EU future. The Union ought to remain a 'civilian' model of governance. Peace, democracy, dialogue and political pluralism must remain the driving principles of the EU's external action inside and outside its borders. The military union is a tool for EU foreign policy and European foreign policy must remain anchored in the interests and values of the Union. As highlighted in the Strategic Compass in 2016 and 2022, collective security, prosperity, democracy and rules-based world order are the driving principles that together with peace regulate the EU foreign and security policy.
- 10 However, peace neither means bold neutralism nor isolationism. A European Armed Force is a much-needed agent of peace in the sense that it will dissuade from using force as a political instrument and from considering aggression as a legitimate action. It will aim at putting an end to the preponderance of power as a diplomatic lever. The use of physical force is legitimate only as long as it is an *ultima ratio* and a reaction against aggression caused by a state or a non-state actor.

II.2 Strategic Autonomy

- 11 To address the current global challenges and crises, the EU should not only act but also think strategically. EU foreign and security policy ought to be proactive rather than reactive as it has been hitherto. The emergence of the concept of strategic autonomy in 2016 encompassed the rise of a new sensitivity among EU experts and stakeholders concerning the future of CFSP and CSDP. Although it remains partially vague and ill-defined, the concept might represent a good starting point for further developing the EU foreign and defence policy according to an innovative and comprehensive understanding of collective security and global order.
- 12 Nowadays, the notion of strategic autonomy has been expanded beyond the defence industry and NATO-EU relations to include areas ranging from technology, climate change, finance and trade competition, cyber security, counterterrorism, pharmaceuticals, digital sovereignty etc. For the time being, the idea of strategic autonomy is grounded on five key policy areas:

- 1) Geoeconomics, i.e. the usage of economic resources as political levers, in times of peace;
 - 2) Security governance, i.e. the management of defence facilities and operational capabilities to contain and deter threats from abroad;
 - 3) Diplomacy, i.e. the maintenance of good relations between EU members and third countries and the promotion of the EU norms and values worldwide;
 - 4) Environmental protection, i.e. the achievement of energy independence, the implementation of policies to counter global warming, first and foremost the EU Green New Deal;
 - 5) Technological independence, i.e., protecting the digital identity of citizens, firms and institutions and investing in integrated and open innovation at the European level.
- 13 To tackle these critical issues coherently, the European Defence Union should introduce an agency for strategic planning. Placed at the very heart of the proposed European Joint Armed Force, this unit would be aimed at providing threat analysis and defining the means, ends, ways and objectives of EU security. The Strategic Compass (2003, 2016, 2022) are valuable reference for forging a new understanding of the risks and opportunities of the Union in the world. The development of in-house strategic planning will put EDU in a position to develop a coherent global agenda based on high-quality background information. The five policy areas highlighted above would be the main fields of research of the strategic cell. Particular emphasis should be also given to the development of effective military intelligence and analysis units and the use of satellites belonging to the EU. EDU strategic cell should work in close touch with the Intelligence and Situation Centre and all the regional units of the EEAS as well as the Commission.
- 14 Strategic thinking requires an understanding of the military industry as well. In this regard, it should be noted that the military industries of EU member states should operate by taking into account the requirements and needs of the joint European Armed Force. Projects of Research & Development in the military field carried out by the planning cell should ensure that the EAF is equipped with effective military systems comparable to other major powers. A common budget is needed. The existence of European equipment would ensure that

European military operations are not subject to the permission of any other third party.

- 15 To appreciate these changes, it is necessary to consider the current European security system, focusing on its peculiarities and structural limitations.

III. AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT EUROPEAN SECURITY SYSTEM

III.1 The EU Foreign and Security Framework in Short

- 16 Since the Lisbon Treaty, the EU's foreign policy has leapt to greater international prestige and influence. Some of the most valuable reforms and acts launched after 2009 are the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, the EU Global Strategy, and the European Defence Agency and Fund, the Capability Development Plan (CDP), the Military Planning and Execution Capacity (MPCC), the Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DEFIS) and the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. Outside the edge of EU Treaties, the Eurocorps provides a space where some EU members are developing common initiatives and missions. Alongside these and other channels of multilateral cooperation, the EU has developed a global network of delegations and representatives, at all political levels, all over the world. In this light, the EU diplomatic presence is stronger than ever.

- 17 At the same time, the CFSP and CSDP have been the two areas where the integration process has been slowest and most cautious. Some foreign and security policies have taken place, but they have proved to be haphazard and sometimes ineffective due to a lack of shared strategic vision among member states. Thanks to PESCO, EEAS, EDA and similar operational programmes, the Union has already conducted five military operations in Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, and the Central African Republic, with the explicit purpose of contributing to resolving violent conflicts beyond its borders. However, the EU has had little influence in the biggest conflicts in the Middle East and Mediterranean basin, as demonstrated by the cases of Syria, Libya, and Yemen.

- 18 In the field of military technology, the European Council has recently agreed just for more enhanced forms of military cooperation within the Union. This is

not enough, but it might represent a good point of departure. In particular, the European Defence Agency represents a positive effort as it promotes technology and research transfer for the common defence and contributes to setting up a European equipment market for defence. Keeping in mind these points, one can understand that the creation of a European Defence Union would not occur in a vacuum. Although a Joint European Armed Force implies a profound reorientation of the whole EU institutional framework, this process does not represent a revolution alien to EU identity and history.

III.2 UN, NATO and the EU

19 Since it does not live in a regional bubble, the European Union should keep and reinforce its diplomatic ties and ongoing partnerships. This is particularly true if we consider the relationship between the EU and the other key international organisations like the G7, the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It should bear in mind that the primary goal of the European Defence Union is to protect the territorial integrity of the European Union and defend EU member states from outside attack. The proposed European Armed Force therefore represents a legitimate agency as long as it defends the integrity of the Union.

20 Internationally, the European Union could gain international recognition as a security provider through the United Nations. UN mandate is not necessary, but it would be the United Nations will recognise the EU as a legitimate authority representing European citizens at the international level. In this way, the European Union will become the first regional organisation included in the UN framework. Regarding the UN-EU relations, the signatories to this document recommend only one significant reform: France should share the permanent seat on the UN Security Council with the EU with the other EU members participating in the EAF. This opening represents a symbolic transfer providing political benefits both to the Union and to France as well. On the one side, the EU would become a top-rank and legitimate international security provider, on the other, France would not lose power as she gains a much higher prestige and influence as the most equipped and experienced member of the European Defence Union, namely the new integrated CSDP.

- 21 The establishment of the European Defence Union will transform transatlantic relations as well. Indeed, the quest for EU independence in the domain of defence might change transatlantic security without turning it upside down. Thanks to the joint European Forces, the European Union will become the main partner of NATO. Since the beginning of the Cold War, collective security in Europe implied a solid alliance with the United States. The most recent crises have not broken this profound cultural, economic and political bond. Actually, the demise of the transatlantic community seems neither likely nor desirable.
- 22 However, it should be remarked that NATO is a defensive and voluntary alliance and it can be reverted. Even though it is a binding treaty, it might not be perpetual. The question is whether the commitments of mutual defence will be effectively honoured in case of an armed attack. The increasing geopolitical shift of the US towards Asia and the difficulties encountered by the US Army in dealing with local conflicts pose doubts about the future of NATO. For how long will the US guarantee the defence of the European Union's borders and vital interests, and bear its costs? For how long will the Americans safeguard the neighbouring countries of the EU in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East? For how long will the Americans lead the Atlantic Alliance without the support of a strong responsible ally on the other shore of the Atlantic?
- 23 The current NATO represents an asymmetric alliance dominated by the United States, in which the European countries have a weak negotiating position. The status quo seems not to be the best option available. Nor the bold national rearmament within NATO. Within a US-led NATO, the European states' national sovereignty would be limited by the preponderance of power in the hand of Washington. At the European level, national rearmament will inevitably lead to the restoration of national military sovereignty and all the potential risks derived from a scenario of this kind. The ghost of European militarism might seem distant and unlikely. National rearmament would remain a short-sighted solution in any case. The national armies alone suffer a substantial lack of efficiency because national defence forces are using a high number of incompatible systems which, moreover, are excessively expensive compared e.g. to the low number of standardised systems used by the USA armed forces.

- 24 It should be noted that the position of EU members in NATO worsened after the UK left the EU. BREXIT weakened European military power, motivating the need to regroup forces and strengthen European defence policy. After Brexit, Europe's strategic defence interests no longer overlap with the ones of Britain. London is now inscribed and bound to the so-called Five Eyes system, another security system led by Washington with no participants from continental Europe at its core, despite the sharing of information with some EU members through the so-called Nine Eyes alliance.
- 25 Due to these developments, European defence needs are becoming more and more removed from UK and American interests in areas that may represent threats to the EU but not so much to the US. The Mediterranean area is an excellent example of this. A look at NATO's map of international operations shows which territories are not attractive to the US government. The complexity of transatlantic security requires an innovative and sophisticated solution. Until European policymakers rise above the nation-centric dogmatic conceptions, and join forces to better organise and integrate our defence as equal partners with the Americans, we are bound to be a second-rate political community.
- 26 Given the limits of national rearmament, the reinforcement of the EU pillar of NATO might be the path forward. The creation of the European army will transform the European Union into the main partner of NATO. Practically, this means that the EAF representatives will be involved in NATO gatherings, as permanent members of the group of ambassadors. It should be noted that this option does not imply a total break with the past: the European Defence Union does not require the dissolution of NATO, only its re-alignment beyond the 3-D limitation (no decoupling, no duplication, no discrimination).
- 27 Thanks to this new system of EU-NATO relations, the United States and the member states of the European Union can cooperate on more equal footing. Most likely, the United States will continue to lead the transatlantic community, providing protection, know-how transfer and weapons sale for all NATO EU members. This condition can be accepted if we assume that the alliance does not require a symmetry of forces between the United States and Europe.
- 28 What is mandatory from an EU perspective is that the EU can carry out foreign and security missions even without the participation of Washington. Joint

action is always to be preferred, but it need not be a necessary step, particularly for activities about the defence of member states. It follows that the EAF should be recognized as an independent and legitimate military force by all the states composing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. European security must not be outsourced. These proposals can be traduced in political outputs without revolutionary legal and institutional reforms: NATO framework can be preserved, Articles 4 and 5 included; the ongoing and planned operations and missions can go on; NATO International Staff may remain the same; EU member states can keep their NATO delegations, whereas the so-called ambassadors should be recruited from EDU and thus nominated by the EU Council, not by each national government alone. This latter point requires mutual recognition between NATO and the EU.

- 29 To sum up, creating a European army requires an essential structural change and a re-organisation of EU-NATO relations. Europeans may define their objectives outside NATO to strengthen European Defence. This kind of autonomy does not imply the abandonment of cooperation but rather the establishment of a new level of cooperation, namely the EU-NATO relations, and, above all, a new equilibrium between the European Union, Great Britain and North America in defining common objectives.

IV. THE RESCUE OF NATIONAL ARMIES

IV.1 Beyond National vs. Supranational Clash

- 30 International Relations are in a state of flux, as always. The EU member states have different options to cope with the new IR challenges. A wise and straightforward choice can save them from the mediocre destiny of passive observers or junior partners in the global competition between China, Russia, India, Turkey and the United States. The member states have a variety of options available, but only one solution seems desirable. This is not the scenario of a pure national organisation, in which the member states behave as total independent players living in a rather precarious international society. Since it implies the absence both of a CSDP and a binding Atlantic alliance, this pre-1952 scenario appears to be dangerous and also very unlikely to occur.

- 31 As anticipated in the previous section, there is a more ordinary intergovernmental decision-making method available: the member states' governments continue to cooperate within NATO and rule over the EU foreign and security agenda (CFSP and CSDP) through unanimity voting and voluntary agreements. Despite being stable and quite predictable, this status-quo option presents remarkable limits. The history and the current state of the European integration process suggest that the lack of unity among them is often a barrier to action. As long as there are veto players at the EU Council, the EU cannot carry out ambitious joint actions and missions whenever the governments are divided by diverging interests and objectives. The EU states would be able to survive and perhaps have a little say in world politics by strengthening their cooperation with the EU or with third countries.
- 32 Notwithstanding this paradox, a nation-states-based approach at the European level seems to be short-sighted and fragile. CSDP will not produce valuable results as long as it depends on forum bargaining under conditions of unanimity and veto powers. Besides, voluntary cooperation does not guarantee preventive protection. In other words, it is not a positive factor in terms of deterrence.
- 33 Among all the scenarios possible, the path towards closer integration seems the brightest. A more innovative and experimental grand design integrating defence, diplomacy, and development aid will allow a leap forward into a more coherent foreign and defence policy (CFDP), namely EDU. Such a higher degree of integration of CFDP will not be to the detriment but reinforce the European peoples' sovereign power. A top-down approach and hierarchical centralisation is neither necessary nor useful. The EU defence policy should be designed to remain cooperative and as much as possible consensual, with both supranational and national representatives fully involved in the decision-making processes. The member states will continue to be key actors in both the elaboration and implementation of the EU operations. Rather than a zero-sum game between national and supranational forces or a trade-off, we are here promoting a win-to-win and cooperative approach offering to increase the member states' capacity to take sovereign action by taking advantage of the opportunity to merge the member states' military assets under a jointly exercised.

IV.2 The Areas of National Defence

34 None of the member states has the strength nor the resources to address global and regional threats alone. This does not mean that they cannot contribute to common defence nor maintain resources and forces at the national level. Indeed, every member state should maintain sufficient capabilities and authority to protect its citizens within its territory. In this regard, the EU defence framework includes a constitutional guarantee for the survival of nation-states as it confirms their monopoly to make legitimate use of physical force within the national territory. Moreover, national units will remain responsible for the control of internal borders and the fight against organised crime and terrorism.

35 National armed forces can contribute to common defence operations. Member states are free to carry out special peacekeeping and diplomatic missions together with other EU or non-EU countries. Such agreements on cooperation amongst member states are acceptable and welcome as long as they respect the EU *acquis communautaire* and do not clash with other joint actions.

36 Furthermore, the representatives of the member states will continue to exercise their responsibilities at the EU Council as well as through the European Union Military Committee (EUMC). Hence, national governments would continue to determine the EU agenda and contribute to realise it through joint actions and missions. The renewed defence policy would maintain the possibility of constructive abstention in case a member state does not want to participate in joint CSDP actions and policies, decided by a vote with a qualified majority, a procedure that already today avoids endless negotiations, pointless delays, watered-down measures or other techniques of veto.

V. A NEW INSTITUTION FRAMEWORK FOR COMMON DEFENCE

V.1 A New CSDP: The European Defence Union (EDU)

37 A European army cannot be created simply by placing national military units side by side, since, in practice, this would merely mask a coalition of the old sort. Tasks that can be tackled only in common must be matched by common institutions. The EU must have an integrated and autonomous defence, with operational agencies merged at the supranational level and linked to other

main EU institutions like the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament.

- 38 More precisely, we recommend the gradual establishment of a new European Defence Union (EDU) ruling over the whole security and defence policy. The EDU represents the institutional 'child' of the CSDP. EDU would be a voluntary endeavour open to all the EU member states that wish to join and merge their defence power in a joint armed force. EDU is conceived as an umbrella framework, independent and with a specific budget, placed outside the EU treaties just like the European Monetary Union (EMU). In comparison with CSDP, EDU would be characterised by more pronounced supranational features and a greater room for manoeuvre as it would have a permanent staff, community resources and proper operational capabilities. EDU contains the EAF thereby it assures civil control over the military.
- 39 The High Representative will take the lead of EDU. The HR will be assisted by two Vice-chairholders: the General Director of Defence Industry and Space (DEFIS) (Commission) and the new figure of the Commander-in-Chief of the European Armed Force (described below (chapter 4 section b)). All three prominent figures of the new CSDP are called to play a proactive role in EU diplomatic, foreign and security policy worldwide, acting as official representatives of the Union and its citizens. They shall, from time to time and no less than once a year, give information on the State of the Union and present the main points of his general policy in front of both the European Parliament and the European Council. This means that the heads of EDU are responsible in front of the two legislative bodies.
- 40 To increase the cohesion between the Council and the Commission, the HR Representative should work in close touch with the President of the European Council. Together, they would be charged with preparing an agenda for the EDU to implement. Besides, the HR will require support from the military staff through the head of EAF and from the Commission through the chairholder of DG-DEFIS. Additionally, EDU chairholders and vice-chairholders should maintain a constructive exchange with EEAS' and the Commission's regional agencies (Africa, Americas etc.) on all those occasions in which, geographically and functionally, the range of their activities overlaps.

- 41 The democratic deficit that characterises the CFSP/CSDP could be reduced by granting both the European Parliament and the EC Council the power of supervision over the EDU agenda. In other words, EDU's democratic legitimacy depends on the accountability of its activities to the political, particularly legislative, institutions of the EU. Consequently, the EDU policies, promoted by the three heads of EDU – the HR, the Council President and the Head of Defence – should be approved through qualified majority voting (QMV). This voting system concerns all the policies already in place or of a routine nature. By contrast, a minority of issues should be decided by at least a 2/3 vote at the EU Council level only. Among these extraordinary measures, we can include the approval of out-of-border missions and arms procurement for third countries. Unanimity won't be used anymore. To reduce the democratic gap separating EU institutions from citizens, popular interrogations can be introduced. In line with Art. 20 TFEU, civil society can submit formal queries to the European Parliament regarding the CFSP/CSDP policies they want to be blocked, modified or reconsidered. The European Citizens' Initiative would need to collect signatures from at least 1 million people from 7 different member states.
- 42 The new defence framework will be created gradually, according to the phases sketched in Chapter 5. There will have to be a transitional period before this European army is set up. Before the launch of the Joint European Armed Force, EDU would provide a political structure for the European Intervention Initiative, PESCO and the national armies of the EU members engaged, on a voluntary basis, in the EAF. After the interim phase, the new CSDP will be responsible for establishing a European military method(S), organising the contingents, the equipment, the armaments, and the supplies due from each state to the EU Force. The contingents furnished by the participating states would be incorporated into the EAF gradually, following the four stages mentioned below.
- 43 Alongside coordinating the traditional defence issues, EDU staff should work in close touch with the strategic cell to provide solutions to the new trends in Defence, such as artificial intelligence, quantum economics, and space economics. Although a more detailed analysis of these matters is needed, the signatories of this paper endorse the idea that the EU ought to take the lead

in dealing with these new trends. Furthermore, the existing European Defence Agency (EDA) and the Center for Defence Innovation (HEDI) should be gradually integrated into EDU under the control of the two vice-chairholders.

- 44 The supranationalisation of these bodies would increase defence innovation throughout the product life cycle and ultimately improve the Union's defence capabilities. Because EDA and HEDI are linked to the European Defence Fund and the Military Mobility Action Plan, they are critical to developing a strong and innovative space industry while maintaining the EU's autonomous, reliable, and affordable access to space. This coordination will improve the crucial link between space, defence, and security.

V.2 The European Armed Force (EAF)

- 45 The only way to serve common European interests and values is by common means and institutions. The European Armed Force should be the result of an authentic merging process towards common responsibilities and tasks, not a mere grouping together of national military units. EAF is, in effect, an all-encompassing armed force including infantry and mechanised units, naval units, satellites, and intelligence assets.

- 46 At the same time, the creation of the European Army through the establishment of the EAF does not mean suppressing national armed forces overnight. A total and immediate merging would not only be a political issue but also a mistake from a military point of view. To avoid the risks of an all-out centralisation, the Common European Armed Force will be based on a federal and multilayer model. Member state armies will coexist side-by-side with a federal armed force. This multilevel governance has long been the hallmark of the United States, with its National Guard, and may remind the current Swiss military system.

- 47 The supranational level will count fewer divisions than the sum of the individual national armies. However, the supranational agencies should retain full control of naval, air and intelligence capabilities and weapons except those used for pure national defence (see section 3b).

- 48 EAF should be a purely professional army recruited by the EU, funded by the EU, trained by the EU, and used only by the EU whenever the EU decides.

The idea of a European Army being composed of various national units would not ensure combat effectiveness. For this reason, major military powers prefer to act alone. EAF should be trained similarly as already practised in a few training centres around Europe. It should be based in a few European locations chosen according to the EU's strategic needs.

49 EAF personnel should be separate from the military forces of the EU member states, even though joint training programmes might be set up to improve coordination between the national and supranational levels. EAF recruitment should start with the 5,000 units of the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity /EU RDC), envisaged in the 2022 Strategic Compass. Then, the joint army would be expanded to 25,000 recruits and reach 60,000 recruits within 6 years. This number of recruits should constitute a fighting force in its entirety and should not include maintenance or other personnel. The military staff should be trained continuously and its forces should not be involved in combat operations before they reach at least a 2-year training.

50 Institutionally, the European Joint Armed Force is an executive body linked closely with EDU. At the top of this framework stands the Head of Defence, a new institutional figure corresponding to the Commander-in-Chief chairing a Supreme General Staff. The Commander in Chief would be jointly nominated (for a non-renewable period of 5 years) by the European Parliament and the EU Council. During his mandate, the Head of Defence will also be vice-chairholder of EDU side by side with the Director General of DG DEFIS, and under the supervision of the head of EDU, namely the HR Representative. The Supreme General Staff would be composed of representatives from the different Euroforce's units (navy, army, cyber-security etc). The Common Force would be divided into thematic units similar, *mutatis mutandis*, to the EU Commission's DGs. To provide an example, the EAF would include a Naval and Aircraft General Staff (NAGS)

51 At the end of the interim period, EAF should be equipped with significant artillery, anti-missile, and electronic warfare systems as well as a competitive submarine fleet. Special attention should also be paid to the creation of effective defence lines at the European Union's external borders on land, as well as to the establishment of an effective naval patrolling force on sea.

- 52 During the transitory period, the intergovernmental system at the base of CFSP will be preserved, although unanimity requirements should be avoided or considerably reduced. In this phase, national military procurement and the respective budgets must be coordinated to avoid duplication, ensure compatibility of systems and make up for the current military capability gap.
- 53 After this preparatory phase, the EDU would operate according to its mandates and missions. The operation of the EDU EAF would be constantly monitored by the European Parliament (notably its Foreign and Security Policy Committee) and by the EU Council of Ministers of Defence. It would be subject to the jurisdiction of the EU Court of Justice and auditing by the EU Court of Auditors. In case of any breach of the EU law, the Parliament, the Commission or the Council should have the faculty to request the Court of Justice to order the termination of the operation in question and the suspension or removal of the responsible officials.

VI. A NEW INSTITUTION FRAMEWORK FOR COMMON DEFENCE

- 54 We, the signatories of this appeal, propose the creation of the Joint European Armed Force in 4 main stages. During the same legislative period ranging from 2024 to 2029, the European Defence Union Treaty should be signed by the member states that wish to integrate their security systems further. As anticipated, EDU would be a new pillar of the EU framework. Like EMU, EDU would be a new branch of EU policy-making external to the existing Treaties. The gradual creation of the European Army could go along the negotiation process of EDU, provided that the two processes of integration are bound together and that one deserves the other to be completed. In other words, the first steps towards EAF do not necessarily follow the signature of the EDU, however, the ultimate creation of the EAF needs the establishment of the EDU framework.
- 55 So said, we can divide the four stages towards the European Armed Force as follows:
- **By May 2025:** Some policies towards the European Armed Force can be implemented immediately without modifying the existing treaties. The member states participating in the negotiations to form the European Defence Union may form a force the size of a division

(20-30,000 men). However, the EU should invest more and reach the target number, set in Helsinki in December 1999, of a rapid intervention force of 50,000/60,000 men by the end of phase 3. Besides, the Council should approve the Strategic Compass introducing a 5,000-man rapid intervention force. Finally, the immediate enlargement of the existing Franco-German Brigade to include other countries willing to form the first nucleus of the EAF.

- **By May 2026:** EDU and the first nucleus of the EAF should be set up. The steering committee of the Euroforce called the Defence Council, would be composed of one representative from each member state. The Defence Council would be chaired by the Commander in Chief jointly nominated (for a non-renewable period of 5 years) by the European Parliament and the EU Council. The EAF military staff will be progressively enlarged. The European Defence Agency should be progressively transformed as the operational core of the EAF.
- **By June 2028:** The process of creation of the planning cell and EAF units is well underway. In this phase, the first nucleus of the Naval and Aircraft General Staff (NAGS) should be enforced. NAGS would be chaired by the Commander in Chief, jointly nominated (for a non-renewable period of 5 years) by the European Parliament and the EU Council. NAGS presupposes the fusion of all existing naval and aircraft fleets of the participating member states by 2030.
- **From June 2032:** The EAF will operate under the responsibility of the Commander in Chief and the two chairholders of EDU. A Supreme General Staff composed of representatives from the different EDU units (navy, army, cyber-security etc). NATO and the UN Security Council are recognised as strategic partners. The High Representative, together with the EAF Commander in Chief and the head of DG-DEFIS, would present the new agenda of EU foreign and security policy in front of the legislative chambers of the European Parliament and the European Council.

VII. THE GOALS OF THE EUROPEAN DEFENCE UNION

56 The mission of a European Defence Union, equipped with its autonomous defence force, could specifically aim, among other goals, to:

- 1) Implement joint defence capabilities that effectively deter any external power from attacking an EU member state;
- 2) Increase peaceful relations between the European Union and the wider Europe (i.e. Turkey, Russia, and other Eastern European countries);
- 3) Provide peace promotion, peacekeeping missions and humanitarian efforts (in collaboration with UN, NATO, G7 and other international organisations);
- 4) Improve the geopolitical stability of the Mediterranean basin;
- 5) Increase cooperation with the countries in the Global South and support their development and security;
- 6) Guarantee energy security and arrest climate change;
- 7) Protect the digital identity and safety of EU citizens;
- 8) Manage defence industry and missile defence;
- 9) Sustain the evolution of the Euro as a global currency.
- 10) Protect external borders control and run transnational peacekeeping operations;
- 11) Manage the new trends in Defence, i.e. space, quantum economics, and big data;
- 12) React to any new external threats rapidly and effectively.

57 Through these challenging activities, the Union will transform itself into a peacekeeper with global mandates. After decades of missed expectations and constraints, EDU may become the engine of the integration process as a whole, improving the mutual solidarity among citizens from different countries. The EU is already perceived as more than just an instrumental alliance, and this reform would be a further leap toward a robust security community.

58 A democratic, peaceful and value-based foreign and defence policy can be a crucial factor in increasing a common sense of belonging among Europeans and a stabilising factor for today's world politics.

VIII. REPORT OF THE PLENARY MEETING

- 59 The paper was shared to the study group members and discussed at a plenary session on June 11, 2024. Below are some of the most salient exchanges and topics that animated the debate among the participants of the plenary session.
- 60 A very important point was raised by Maja SAVEVSKA regarding the financing of a European Armed Force (EAF), considering as options joint debt, levying specific taxes and/or member State contributions. The suggested path of creating the EAF amongst the willing Member States only makes these matters even more complicated as the classical EU schemes would not be applicable.
- 61 Klemens FISCHER recognized the quality of the paper and the appropriateness of having a deepened academic debate on the subject, notwithstanding and even because of the fact that the political conditions for setting up a joint armed force are not there. In particular, he referred to the constitutional obstacles existing in some Member States, an obstacle that in Austria flows from international law and could not even be overcome by the majority required for amending the constitution. He also referred to the problems occurring with regard to a decision-making process involving majority voting. He notably questioned whether the components of a joint armed force coming from a certain Member State would be willing and in a position to implement a decision by the highest governing body which was taken against the vote of their State of origin. He also questioned whether it makes sense to aim at a European defence that would not be dependent on the NATO forces, pointing to the immense financial means that would be required for making the defence forces of some European states effective and that the European nations, in any case, would not make it to catch up with but remain dependent on the logistical performance of the US forces.
- 62 Kalypso NICOLAIDIS suggested a highly interesting thought experiment: What would have been the consequences, if the EAF were available already in February 2022? Which impact could it have on armed conflicts such as in Ukraine and Gaza?

63 Vadim ATNASHEV underlined that it is NATO, at least nowadays, to guarantee that Russia doesn't attack other EU member states. Would an EAF provide the same guarantee?

64 And Nina DIDENKO reminded me that creating an army would mean for Europeans going to fight where involved.

65 Peter SCHIFFAUER stated that the mere existence of an EAF would not change anything, but that all would depend on the political decisions taken by the governing bodies which hopefully would act with the same prudence as currently the NATO and the European Council. The political desirability of the EAF is due to a lack of trust in the long-term effectiveness of the NATO guarantees. It could be developed gradually by enlarging and beefing up the structures of the Eurocorps. The financing of an EAF is a challenge similar to that of the green transformation of the economy. Political representatives should have the courage to point out the sacrifices which the European society would need to make for its long-term benefits.

66 Andrea BOSCO pointed to the close cooperation between France and Germany which, in his view, already constitutes a kind of factual federation. This idea has been expressed in his Commentary.

67 Finally, Enrico CIAPPI replied to many comments clarifying some point of his Paper:

- The EAF is intended as a highly integrated and not centralized system. The model was the Swiss federal army, based on the coexistence of two levels working in close touch and highly integrated. Also, the voluntary base for the States to join the EAF is a way to make it appetible, even recognizing its limits raised by some participants.
- The longest chapter of the Paper is on relations between EAF and NATO, which should not end. The Paper, even recognizing the superiority of tactical and logistical management of NATO, shows that there is room for an independent EU army as a second-rate member of the NATO framework. The existence of a structured EU system would only optimize the existing forces. Also, the EU should not have a giant army compared to China, the USA or India but with

a supranational armed force EU can transform itself into a strategic player and a responsible global actor that can use soft and hard power when needed.

68 After the plenary meeting, Professor Andrea BOSCO submitted the following written commentary.

- According to Bosco, in the perspective of a direct involvement (likely after the American Presidential elections) of a number of EU member States in the Ukrainian War, it is plausible to expect a joint declaration, on the model of the 1950 Schuman Declaration, by the French and German governments announcing their readiness to create the nucleus of a European single army, open to membership. France and Germany already constitute a de facto federation, having a single currency, a single foreign policy, and integrated administrative bodies.
- Without such a union at its heart, the EU would not exist any longer.
- The readiness by the Italian, Belgian, Dutch and Luxemburg governments to join France and Germany to create a single authority to control the production of coal and steel (fundamental to industrial reconstruction) transformed a bilateral agreement into the first European supranational organization. As in 1950, the eventual readiness of a number of other EU member states to join France and Germany in the creation of a single Army, would transform a bilateral pact into a new European institution, initially external to the EU (as it was for the WEU). The fact that it is not possible to create a single Army without the establishment of the organs typical of a federation (as it was for the EDC and the EPU in 1951-54), inevitably will put in motion a constitutional process leading to the creation of a Federal Union. Such a Union would constitute the inner circle within the EU, which continues to exist as it is at present, and it would constitute the power of the magnet towards the member states not yet ready to join it at the beginning (as it is the Eurozone).
- An open question is the readiness of the British government to join from the beginning the Franco-German nucleus. The unexpected

negative economic consequence of Brexit already reverted the trend of public opinion in Britain, and only the outbreak of the Ukrainian War put on hold the claims for Irish reunification and Scottish independence. The irony is that Great Britain left in 2020 the EU in a mess and the manifest crisis of growth, and might join 2025 a European federation. British pragmatism might offer us surprises, as it was the 1940 Churchill offer of 'indissoluble union' to France. The problem is that unlike in 1940, British public opinion is not yet ready for such a dramatic move.

- The reason for being of a Single European Army (we already have a common European Army within NATO, under American command) would be to fill the existing power vacuum (only partially filled by the American power) at the heart of Europe, which made it possible the invasion of Ukraine by Putin and the Gaza genocide by Netanyahu. The absence of such a deterrence already costed the life of one million young Russians and Ukrainians, and a state of permanent civil wars in Palestine, Syria and Libya, adding to the count of victims (left alone for immense material damages) another million or more.
- The simple announcement by France and Germany to create the nucleus of a Single European Army might immediately put an end to the Ukrainian War, thus preventing the its possible enlargement to involve a number of EU member states and a potentially significant number of death of Europeans. It is perhaps worth to mention that the 'great betrayal' by the American Senate in 1919 not to ratify the Versailles Treaty and with it the Anglo-American Guarantee Treaty to the North-Eastern French borders (a precursor of the NATO treaty) costed the lives of half millions young American men, and of some fifty millions Europeans. Hitler and Putin would in fact not dare to revert to violence in order to modify the existing status quo if they knew the readiness of the superpowers to automatically intervene to prevent it.
