



**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION**

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER  
TRANSFORMATION**

**SACT's REMARKS to**

**EUMCCS**

**Brussels, 17 May 2016**

**V1\_4**

**Général d'armée aérienne Denis MERCIER**



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Thank you Michail,

M. Domecq, Dear Jorge,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to strengthen the links between Allied Command Transformation and the European Union Military Committee.

We are following the leadership of High Representative Mogherini and Secretary General Stoltenberg, who are both keen to build on our Nations' desire for more **complementarity and cooperation** between our two organizations.

In this context, let me share with you how I believe we can build on our leaders' initiative and enhance the NATO-EU relationship in the military domain:

- I will start with one obvious rationale: NATO and the EU bring complementing qualities needed to collectively and effectively face the challenges of a complex and highly dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> century environment.
- I will then expand further on how this cooperation might take shape: in preparing for future challenges, we must synchronize our adaptation from a comprehensive standpoint and adapt our processes both from a military capacity perspective and whole of government approach.



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- I will also emphasize the active supportive role that ACT and the European Defence Agency might play, by synchronizing the efforts made by individual Allies and Member States with those made by NATO and the EU to prepare for the future.

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So, let me start with a simple observation.

NATO and the EU will continue to face an increasing number of **common** threats and challenges.

These challenges include hybrid strategies caused by some state and non-state actors, energy security vulnerabilities, the consequences of failing states, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to name but a few.

The **simultaneity** and **combination** of all these threats are further contributing to the growing **complexity** of our security environment.

This complexity is born essentially of the interconnection of our societies in a globalized world. For any given crisis today, it is very difficult to assess its impact and possible 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order effects, either in their speed or scope. An instability situation in Central and South Asia for instance might create secondary effects close to the Alliance's periphery.

Due to this increasing complexity of global interdependence and rapid rate of change, I believe it is an imperative for NATO to open its aperture and find innovative means to collaborate with International Organizations like the EU to face future challenges with a high level of coordination.



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And as you all know, there are already many pressing questions that both NATO and the EU are expected to answer.

For instance, how would we respond should the situation worsen simultaneously in Syria, Libya and in the Baltics? What would the governance of our mutual efforts look like?

In my view, NATO/EU responses must reflect and espouse the same features as our security environment. Our efforts need to be **coherent, timely and comprehensive**. I believe the era of having separated and disjointed roles for each main international organization has gone.

We should start by improving our timeliness by anticipating crises more efficiently.

As was emphasized during recent scenario based discussions at the NATO ministerial level and during the recent Allied Reach 16 exercise, potential State and Non-State actors are likely to employ hybrid strategies operating below traditional thresholds used to characterize a crisis.

I believe NATO and EU have an excellent opportunity for cooperation regarding Hybrid threat and resilience. Specifically, identified and agreed areas for long-term cooperation on Hybrid are Cyber defense, Strategic Communication, Civil-Military Cooperation and Strategic awareness.

Concerning strategic awareness, we need to make it more comprehensive and continuous by leveraging and connecting efforts made in both Organizations, to efficiently identify abnormal activity, and connect what appear to be unrelated events, and then attribute responsibility.

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Meanwhile, we should also acknowledge that strategic surprises remain possible. NATO and the EU have much to gain in combining their efforts to build a shared resilience between nations, taking into account the strengths of both our organizations.

From the Alliance's point of view, these necessary enhancements of strategic awareness and resilience are only part of the overall transformation of the Alliance's posture... a posture which needs to address the complexity of our security environment, with a 360 degree approach.

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Two key drivers for the adaptation of NATO's deterrence and defence posture are readiness and responsiveness.

And, we must ensure that our posture remains built upon the right mix of conventional, nuclear, and missile defence forces at the appropriate level of readiness and responsiveness.

Here, the Readiness Action Plan decided at Wales was a first step to implement short-term adaptation, with a main focus on NATO Response Forces.

We are now taking a more holistic look at the whole military capacity which underpins the Alliance's posture.

We have identified 6 focus areas to ensure a high level of responsiveness for our forces. All these areas offer ways and opportunities for increased cooperation between our Nations and especially our two Organizations.



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- The continuous improvement of our Command and Control needs will require the development of new, resilient and more adaptive architectures.

Shared standards will define these operational architectures and interoperability. This is the spirit behind the current Federated Mission Networking initiative, which is already being adopted by many nations outside NATO.

The definition of these standards enables increased coordination with other International Organizations and Partner Nations because what we want is to be interoperable from day 1 with our Partners in any NATO operation.

Part of these C2 architectures deals with how we build a permanent and shared strategic awareness. Indeed, key to our responsiveness is how Command and Control supports timely decision-making.

We are investigating a new approach, based on non-classified information and open sources which would enable a better sharing of information with Partners, other International Organizations, such as the EU across the Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic, Financial, Intelligence, Legal spectrum.

- The interoperability and responsiveness of our forces will also require a bigger training and exercise effort, reflecting the complex security environment.

NATO and EU could especially develop more tightly coordinated exercises, especially in the Mediterranean.



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This would provide tangible demonstration of NATO-EU cooperation, building on the Visegrad EU Battle group certification exercise linked with Trident Juncture 15.

- The responsiveness of our forces will also depend on the coherence and consistency of our Partnership activities.

At stake is the credibility of our work with Partners, and by this I mean both for Nations and International Organizations. Indeed, due to the interconnection of crises, Partners will be increasingly involved in our operations and we must be able to leverage their contributions to their fullest extent.

Our credibility will also rely on our ability to project stability and contain crises. We are faced with increasing and urgent requests from many Partners, especially for defence capacity building.

To answer their calls, it would clearly be helpful if we could connect and synchronize the bilateral and multinational activities we conduct in these countries.

- Logistics and Sustainability will also be key elements for the readiness and responsiveness of our respective forces.

We should be convinced of the added-value of sharing our logistical strengths and weaknesses. This would help us to improve mutual support between each Organization.



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For instance, NATO might usefully be advised on how the EATC (European Air Transport Command) could help deployment of NATO forces as well as we should not exclude a priori the use of the Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS) by the EU.

Both organizations should also share approaches to solve the current issues with delays for border-crossing approval or the possible impacts of the European Single Sky on the deployment of forces on very short notice.

- We should not forget that our responsiveness will rely on our human capital, which must have the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to make the best use of all our capabilities and deal with complex situations in which our two organizations would be involved.

Therefore, education in NATO and EU should better coordinate the use of existing centres of excellence and education centres accredited by both organizations.

- Last, but not least, we have to identify the capabilities we need to build a coherent combat system in the future, able to meet all foreseen threats.

NATO and EU have independent capability development planning process.

But they both start from a similar baseline: the answers by Nations to capability surveys we already conduct together.

NATO and EU rely on 22 common national capabilities, not considering Partners' collaborations.





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We could hope for greater complementarity in the results of our planning processes, especially as we identify the main shortfalls.

Such coordination would help identify, in each Organization, new ways to mitigate these main shortfalls, including financing means, sharing of Nations' long-term plans and innovation initiatives. On the EU side, the elaboration of a European Defence Action Plan could really stimulate the development of new capabilities where synergies can be achieved between the civilian and military domains, that could benefit to our two organizations.

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ACT and the EDA could play a critical role in the development of this EU-NATO coordination.

Much can already be achieved by an improved synchronization of ongoing initiatives in both organizations.

Let's take an example in the area of logistics and sustainment.

The EDA is seeking to enhance the interoperability of rotary wing medical evacuation. The agency is currently working on innovative solutions that could be provided by the civilian sector. This work could be pertinent for NATO operations as well.

In terms of Command and Control, NATO is looking at how drones can fit into the Alliance's future C2 architectures and operational standards.



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At the same time, the EDA works on the integration of drones in the European Single Sky.

A combined effort could help ensure interoperability both with the civilian rules and the military networks.

These two examples emphasize how the Nations' support for a better collaboration between ACT and the EDA would be helpful if we want to innovate and develop our future military capabilities consistently...without unnecessary duplication of effort.

With this support, ACT and the EDA intend to increase their cross-participation in NATO or EU fora. It would help us to share long-term vision, identify new ideas, assess them and support Nations in the implementation of the most promising ones.

This would give a very encouraging sign for NATO-EU cooperation and more importantly provide tangible results.

A first step will be the organization, here in Brussels, of the NATO Industry Forum and the EDA annual conference as two back-to-back events on the 9th and 10th November 2016.

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To summarize, I believe there are lots of opportunities via these six focus areas of Command and Control, Logistics and Sustainment, Exercise and Training, Partnership, Capabilities, and Human Capital, for collaboration and cooperation between our two organizations.

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I will close on this idea of cooperation by acknowledging that this is no longer a question of choice, but a question of will, and finally, even a question of making best use of limited resources.

The credibility of our ability to address complex current and future crises will depend directly on how we cooperate and develop our future combat system together.

I'm very eager to hear your insights on this cooperation and especially on how ACT and EDA can support you.

Thank you very much for your attention.

I will now leave the floor to questions.