



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

SACT's REMARKS to

**The European Parliament subcommittee on security
and defence (SEDE)**

Brussels, 16 June 2016

Général d'armée aérienne Denis MERCIER



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Thank you Mrs [Ana] Fotyga,

Distinguished members of the European Parliament,

M. Domecq, Dear Jorge,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a great pleasure to have this opportunity to address your committee in the company of the European Defence Agency's Chief Executive.

I will build on his approach and also advocate for more tangible **complementarity and cooperation** between NATO and the European Union.

As I concluded in my speech to the EU Military Committee one month ago, I believe that such a cooperation is no longer a question of choice, but a question of will. I believe we have no other choice but to leverage the competencies of each organization and make the most of limited resources.

To support this idea, I will start with an observation: NATO and the EU bring the complementary qualities needed to collectively and effectively face the challenges of the complex and highly dynamic environment of the 21st century.

Turning more specifically to our respective military capacities, I will outline why we need to adapt further. I will describe the six main areas of efforts identified by ACT to shape the vision for the next 15 years.



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I will then expand on the active and supporting role that ACT and the European Defence Agency might play to develop the capacities needed by the EU and NATO to meet their respective levels of ambition.

Allow me to start by quoting the High Representative, Federica Mogherini: *“the world has changed dramatically during the last decade”*.

I think we all agree that the pace of change is unlikely to slow and that NATO and the EU will face even more common threats and challenges in the future.

As we already see today to our East and South, the simultaneity and combination of all the threats are further contributing to the growing complexity of our security environment.

We are in fact entering a new era where the resolution of crises requires a higher level of coordination between States and the many different International Organizations.

Improved cooperation between NATO and the EU can help Allies, Member States and even Partners, better anticipate crises, respond in a timely and comprehensive manner and recover from any setback or strategic surprise.

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This leads me to my second point.

Our respective military capacities must adapt accordingly to ensure effective defence and deterrence, today and in the future.



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Within ACT, we have identified six areas of effort to improve our posture and ensure it remains relevant in the face of any challenge, anytime.

Yet, these areas are not exclusive to NATO; in fact, they offer opportunities for increased cooperation and can help define a common direction of travel between Allies, Member States and our two organizations.

- First, future operations will require the development of new, resilient and more adaptive architectures for our Command and Control.

These architectures should enable the smooth integration of Allied or any other force as well as the cooperation between different international organizations.

They should also allow a better development of strategic awareness to detect, identify the early signs of crises, and attribute responsibilities.

On this issue, to better deal with hybrid scenarios, we want to promote a new approach, based on non-classified information and open sources, complemented as necessary with classified intelligence.

This would ease the sharing of information with other International organizations such as the EU.

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

In line with the priorities of the High Representative Federica Mogherini, NATO and EU could develop more tightly coordinated exercises.



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This would provide a tangible demonstration of NATO-EU cooperation, as we did with the Visegrad EU Battle group certification exercise, linked with the recent major NATO exercise Trident Juncture 15.

- A third area of effort is Partnership.

We need to increase our level of interoperability if we want to benefit from our Partners' regional expertise and if we really want to project stability and leverage their contribution in any of our respective operations.

In NATO, we are developing a concept of individually tailored roadmaps for each Partner. The roadmaps would be designed to meet our interoperability objectives and to simplify, optimize and synchronize the numerous Partnership initiatives we have implemented.

The modular framework we develop to shape these roadmaps could offer a new area for cooperation with the EU, with the aim at avoiding the unnecessary duplication of efforts.

- We will also need to think about new and innovative approaches to logistics and sustainability.

This will include greater cooperation and mutual support within the civil and military logistics and sustainment environment, an area in which the EU has developed interesting perspectives.

- The responsiveness of our military capacity will also depend on the education of our human capital.



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NATO and the EU have accredited many centres of excellence and education centres to provide the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to deal with a myriad of new security challenges.

Here again, closer cooperation would allow both organizations to benefit from the competencies all these centres offer.

- Last, but not least, we must identify the capabilities we need to build a coherent system of forces in the future, able to meet all foreseeable threats.

There is a nascent momentum in each organization to be leveraged. Allies seem committed to reinvesting in their Defence to the level pledged in Wales; and the EU is currently working on a preparatory action on Defence Research.

This reinvestment in the defence and security sector would be a game changer, if it is used to overcome the shortfalls identified by both organizations. This is why we should look for greater complementarity in the results of our respective defence planning processes.

We could also expand our dialogue with Nations to gain insight on their long-term plans and integrate them in our Defence planning.

This would give more coherency and continuity to our respective capability requirements, which could be addressed through multinational initiatives, such as the Framework Nation Concept, to the benefit of both organizations.



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These questions can be raised during the next NATO Industry Forum and the EDA annual conference to be organized as two back to back events, respectively on the 9th and 10th of November 2016 in Brussels.

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Talking of the EDA brings me to my last point.

Closer collaboration between ACT and the EDA could bring tangible proposals for cooperation to the table of both organizations.

Much could already be achieved by an improved synchronization of ongoing initiatives in both NATO and EU.

For Command and Control for instance;

NATO is looking at how drones can fit into the Alliance's future C2 architectures and operational standards, while EDA is working on the integration of drones in the European Single Sky.

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

Following this example, ACT and the EDA could consistently facilitate the development of future military capabilities by supporting innovation and by avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts.

There is a need to share innovation, identify new ideas, assess them and implement the most promising ones through the most appropriate national or multinational initiatives.

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Such innovation would encompass not only short-term recombination of available technologies to enhance existing platforms and sensors but also more prospective work driven by future technological breakthroughs.

And ACT and EDA, with their respective networks and knowledge could contribute to a better convergence of civilian innovation and Defence requirements.

The collaboration of our two entities could also help synchronize national innovation efforts, including those developed by the United States, in order to keep the highest level of interoperability in the future.

In closing, I would say that the train for our work on preparing the future has already left the station.

It is up to us to make sure that all EU and NATO stakeholders are on board.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my comments, it is less a question of choice than of willingness. The preservation of peace and security in Europe depends on this cooperation.

I can assure you that ACT and EDA have already started working together and intend to deliver practical areas of cooperation in the coming months.

I thank you for your attention and now leave the floor for questions.