



**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION**

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER  
TRANSFORMATION**

**SACT's Opening REMARKS to**

**NATO Industry Forum**

**Brussels, 09 Nov 2016**

**As delivered**

**Général d'armée aérienne Denis MERCIER**

Messieurs les Ambassadeurs,

Excellences,

Amiraux, Généraux,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Distinguished guests,

Thank you General Marc COMPERNOL for your kind welcome words, and thank you for the outstanding support of the Belgian authorities and their staffs to help the NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defence Investment, Camille Grand, and myself co-organize the NATO Industry Forum in such exceptional conditions.

This year's NATO Industry Forum is again sponsored by our Secretary General, Jens STOLTENBERG, and is attended by representatives from the European Union, the European Defence Agency, industries, academia, national Armament Directors, Chiefs of Defense, Military and Permanent Representatives to NATO, and the NATO Industrial Advisory Group – all together representing 35 nations and 83 industries.

There could be no greater proof, that the NATO Industry Forum has become **the** annual capstone event where NATO, and National political and military leadership meet with industry, academia and think-tanks from Europe and North America, to debate strategies aiming to define innovative solutions to capability needs that will enhance the Alliance's credibility, and ensure NATO to keep the military edge – as a vital contribution to the Trans-Atlantic security.

Building capabilities that fit NATO's purposes requires deep strategic foresight, and an understanding of the technological trends that will affect the future operating environment. The aim is to ensure that NATO remains a pre-eminent, powerful and efficient organisation now and in the future by leveraging all capabilities necessary to keep military superiority.

But NATO cannot do this alone. Building the 21<sup>st</sup> century defence forces that will make the Alliance's defence and deterrence posture credible, can only be achieved through a close cooperation with industry.

Therefore, regarding Industry, the final communiqué of the Warsaw Summit was very clear: *“A stronger defence industry across the Alliance, which includes small- and medium-sized enterprises, greater defence industrial and technological cooperation across the Atlantic and within Europe, and a robust industrial base in the whole of Europe and North America, remain essential for acquiring needed Alliance capabilities.”*

Industry is therefore a crucial contributor to Alliance capability development and there is an increasing need to share innovation, identify new ideas and concepts, assess them and implement the most promising ones through appropriate national or multinational initiatives.

Modern threats have no boundaries. It is also true for the accessibility of new technologies, and there's a fierce competition between a wide span of actors in the race to be a step ahead of any potential adversary.

But there is no one organization in the world that has more powerful industry if we combine the competences of our 28 (soon 29) nations plus many Partners. It is an incredible strength!

This sets the scene for this year's Industry Forum.

We need to challenge our current processes to foster innovation and deliver the right capabilities on the right time to mitigate identified shortfalls. And we need to network our competences and look ahead to assess the decisions we make today.

Thank you again for your presence, and I'm looking forward to our candid discussions in the breakout and panel sessions.

I wish us all a very fruitful forum!

Thank you for your attention.