

RESOLUTION ON EUROPEAN DEFENCE

Adopted by the UEF Federal Committee, 5 November 2016, Cologne

The Federal Committee of the Union of European Federalists,

in reference:

- to the resolutions on Europe Defence adopted by the Federal Committee in 2013, 2014, and 2015,
- to the resolution on foreign and defence policy adopted by the UEF XXV European Congress in June 2016;

having regard to:

- the Lisbon Treaty;
- to the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy of June 2016;
- the EU-NATO Joint Declaration of July 2016;
- the European Parliament draft report on the European Defence Union 2016/2052(INI);
- the recent proposals for closer defence cooperation put forward jointly by the German and French governments and by the Italian government.

whereas:

- a. the worsening security situation in and around Europe requires a renewed effort to build a common European defence policy;
 - b. the shift of the priorities of US foreign and security policy to Asia-the Pacific risks to create a vacuum in the security of the Mediterranean and the regions bordering Europe and Asia, which only the European Union can fill;
 - c. the result of the British referendum could open up new possibilities for further integration among other Member States in the field of defence;
 - d. over 60% of the European public would be in favour of a broad European project in the area of defence (Eurobarometer 2016/European Parliament);
1. Welcomes the initiatives by the French, German and Italian governments in support of deepening cooperation in the field of defence among EU Member States,
 2. Stresses any further progress in integration cannot remain purely intergovernmental;
 3. Believes that steps must be undertaken in order to create a Defence Union, which would enable the European Union and its Member States to strengthen the defence-related aspects of the Common Security and Defence Policy and to enhance the EU's civilian and military capabilities in the field of conflict prevention and crisis response;
 4. Believes that the principles and values presented in the EU Global Strategy require to be translated into political reality, for instance through a White Book on European security and defence to operationalise and detail the strategic objectives and necessary capabilities, which should lead to the conclusion of an inter-institutional agreement of a binding nature on the EU institutions (and the Member States) as a matter of urgency;
 5. Supports the establishment of permanent EU military headquarters, headed by a Military Operations Commander, with its own operational assets, that would enable the EU, when necessary, to respond to crises without relying exclusively on NATO, and to plan and run EU military and civilian missions, as suggested by the Franco-German paper. This military HQ would complement the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability, which was already established in 2007 and runs all civilian CSDP missions. Synergies between the two HQs as well as with the European Commission and relevant JHA-Agencies, such as the newly established European Border and Coast Guard Agency, should be actively sought;
 6. Calls for the procedural, financial and political obstacles which so far prevented the deployment of the existing Battlegroups to be removed as soon as possible, as suggested in the EU Global Strategy;

7. Supports the creation of multi-national European own forces, to represent the initial nucleus of a future European integrated force, as proposed by the paper presented by the Italian government, that could be deployed upon decision of the Council of Defence Ministers;
8. Suggests that civilian and military resources currently engaged in EU and UN missions, of European countries participating to the structured cooperation, be placed at its institutions disposal;
9. Reminds that concrete advancements in European defence require a significant increase in spending in technology and infrastructure, but that this additional spending will be largely compensated by the economies of scale and the efficiency gains brought by the integration of fragmented national functions into a single European framework ;
10. Considers that a first step is the establishment of a permanent structured cooperation scheme (PeSCo), as foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty (Art. 42.6, 46 TEU and Protocol 10). Such PeSCo should remain open to any other Member State that wishes to join at a later stage;
11. Stresses that a stronger European defence would complement and strengthen NATO, becoming NATO's European pillar, a development that is essential also for a more robust transatlantic relation and a better effectiveness of NATO in the regions bordering the European Union;
12. Believes that in the longer term, the PeSCo should develop a plan to gradually integrate into a (federal) system all or the majority of the defence capabilities of the participating Member States and ensure their deployment at the disposal of the PeSCo decision-making structures;
13. Believes that further steps in integration require a stronger involvement of the European Parliament. This could start with the enhancement of the role of the European Parliament by upgrading the subcommittee for Security and Defence to a fully-fledged Committee and by strengthening the consultation procedures with national parliaments, and the creation of a Council of Defence Ministers, on the model of the Eurogroup, to be chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy;
14. Recommends the creation of a European fund for defence, as written down in art. 41.3 of EU treaty, financed in part with a defence tax and other EU own resources, which would cover part of the military expenses of the PeSCo Member States, the funding of research and development (R&D) in the field of defence, the acquisition of infrastructural assets for the European level and the operations of an autonomous EU military headquarter;
15. Is in favour of the idea of a European Security Union, in support of common security and defence policy, as presented by the German and French Foreign Affairs Ministers. Reminds that a more integrated European defence should be complementary to a broader European security policy, based on a redefinition of the concept of security in a way that it does not include only military but also civil aspects such as energy, cyber, environmental, health security, the prevention of and the struggle against organised crime and terrorism, migration policies, development aid and so forth.
16. Welcomes positively the suggestion by the European Commission to create Eurobonds to support projects by the European defence industry and acquire and develop EU-wide defence technologies and capabilities.