Thank you Vittorio for your kind introduction (Professor Vittorio Emanuele PARSI).

And thank you to my very good friend, Claudio (General Claudio Graziano) for inviting me here today. You know how much I love to visit Rome, and you will better understand me when you get a good taste of Brussels' weather.

Excellencies,

Admirals, Generals,

Professors,

Fellow Officers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

General Graziano just presented his views on the role of Italy in the European Defence and Security. I will provide you some insights and personal thoughts on the evolution process in this domain.

I will begin with a statement. Evolution is the process that ensures the survival of a species. Evolution is the ability of a living species, a company or an organisation to adapt to the new circumstances that differ from what has been the status quo until that time. The timely forecast of these changes offers the luxury of time to plan for a smooth transition. On the contrary, if the changes
are rapid, time is not an ally. **Failure to evolve leads to extinction.** History is full of relevant examples.

I argue that this is the case with the European Union. Failure to foresee the changing geopolitical landscape in the neighbouring area, coupled with the strategic surprise some of these changes inflicted to the international community, led to a situation were quick responses had to be given. Yet, we all know that this is not European Union's trademark. But **survival was at stake.** And in case you would think that this is an overstatement, I quote the Global Strategy: "*We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union*". The High Representative, Madam Mogherini, realised the grave circumstances that were developing and reacted presenting the EU Global Strategy and, shortly afterwards, its Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, without wasting valuable time engaging in academic endeavours and producing intermediate papers of questionable added value.

What we have witnessed since then is the European Union at its best. Working intensively, with a concrete master plan and with a clear objective. To restore the security feeling of the European citizens. To evolve. From the presentation of the EU Global Strategy to that of the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, and from there to the first tangible deliverable, the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability in Brussels, it took less than a year! This proves two things:

- First, that the European Union acknowledged that drastic steps had to be taken in the Security and Defence domain;
- Second, that the European Union can deliver results and meet people's expectations.

Before diving into the details of the evolution process, we should be reminded of what the **desired end-state** looks like. This can be found in the EU Global Strategy, where the vision of a "**stronger Europe**" is offered. The **ways** to reach this end are also described: the European Union should be **credible, responsive and joined-up**. Having the Global Strategy as a compass and the Implementation Plan as a roadmap, actions were undertaken.

We have only made the first steps of this evolution process. We have concluded the conceptual phase where the institutional framework is designed, described and agreed. This is crucial, because all the important tools that have
been rediscovered or invented, they need to be solidly founded to make sure that they will deliver the desired results. Evolution covers multiple dimensions, namely,

- **Defence Capability Development**, that would require and actually lead to a deepened defence cooperation;

- The **adjustment** of the structures, tools and financing, in order to achieve better organisation of the military element of the European Union and to strengthen the relevance, usability and deployability of the EU's rapid response toolbox;

- The enhancement of **Civ-Mil synergies** and better cooperation and coordination between the two distinctive but complementary elements of the CSDP Integrated Approach to external crises and conflicts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The most advertised tools are in the area of Defence Capability Development. This is quite justified; the fulfilment of the Level of Ambition is conditional upon the possession of the relevant defence capabilities. Work in this area will enhance the credibility, responsiveness and jointness of the European Union.

**Permanent Structured Cooperation** is one of these tools, one that has always been in the Treaties (*Articles 42 and 46 of the Treaty on European Union and Protocol No 10 to the Treaty*), waiting for times to mature and call for it. This initiative, PESCO has already achieved a big victory. It managed to have 25 out of 28 EU Member-States making binding commitments to each other, with a view to the most demanding missions and operations. Therefore, one of the stated governing principles, **inclusiveness**, has been satisfied. The other one, equally important is being **ambitious**. I believe that this principle will also be satisfied as it is exclusively in the hands of the Member-States to raise the bar of ambition to the desired level.

Examining the list of the **first batch** of 17 collaborative projects that PESCO members agreed upon, I am personally satisfied with the ambition they display. They cover both the area of capability development as well as the operational dimension, each of them adding a piece to the jigsaw of European
common security and defence. In the beginning of 2018 Member-States participating in PESCO will adopt a formal Council decision on the list of projects to be developed under PESCO. It is to be noted that Italy is the lead nation in 4 of these projects.¹

The **Coordinated Annual Review on Defence** is another tool which in turn aims to better coordinate and synchronise defence planning among Member-States. The lack of such a coordination and synchronisation on a major scale across the European Union results in the loss of **25-100** out of the **200 billion Euros** that are invested annually in defence. CARD could also help address the problem of the multiplicity of types and versions of main defence articles, a situation that hampers effectiveness and interoperability in our missions and operations. The existence of 29 different types of main surface combatants, 16 types of fighter planes and 19 types of armoured vehicles is indicative of the size of the problem.

The **European Defence Fund** and the **European Defence Industry Development Programme** come to complement the previous tools. They will make cooperation more attractive, as financial support will be provided to eligible **defence research** but also to **joint development and acquisition projects**. This is the way for the European Union to actively provide substantial support to the industry and retain the technological advantage over potential competitors or adversaries. Some figures here will make clearer the Commission’s commitment to the success of the Global Strategy’s objective. The Commission will allocate 90 million Euros until 2019 and 500 million Euros every year after for collaborative research in innovative defence technologies and products. Then come development and acquisition. A total of 500 million Euros will be allocated for 2019 and 2020 and 1 billion Euros per year after 2020 will be allocated to collaborative projects of joint development and acquisition of defence equipment and technology. These funds will be added to the ones that the concerned nations will put into these programs.

In the Integrated Approach the European Union applies to external crises and conflicts, the military plays a **modest** but nevertheless **important** role. This role should remain **limited in size and supporting** other ways of engagement of

¹ - **European Training Certification Centre for European Armies**;
- **Deployable Military Disaster Relief Capability Package**;
- **Harbour & Maritime Surveillance and Protection (HARMSPRO)**;
- **Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle / Amphibious Assault Vehicle / Light Armoured Vehicle**.
civilian nature. Therefore, the effort focuses on how to maximise the efficiency of the military contribution. This effort led to the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability, or MPCC. For the first time in its 61 years history the European Union will have a military structure in Brussels level responsible for the non-executive missions in Central African Republic, in Mali and in Somalia.

To that end, I consider the establishment of the MPCC as the best example and the most tangible proof of the EU Military Committee's contribution to the evolution of CSDP and to the improvement of the military element's performance. The Military Committee has been very vocal and insistent on highlighting the gap in the military Chain of Command. A gap that hampered the effectiveness of the military leadership on the ground. The recommendations made were adopted and implemented, although the establishment of an Operational Headquarters for all EU military Missions and Operations, which would be from a military point of view the optimal situation, has not yet become a reality.

Having said that, I don’t see the MPCC in its current shape as the end-state of the EU military permanent planning and conduct capability. I recall that November 2016 Council Conclusions call for, and I quote here: “Adapt the existing EEAS structures to develop the necessary structures and capabilities for the permanent planning and conduct of CSDP missions and operations”. Council conclusions also call for the establishment, quote “[…] as a short term objective […] of a permanent operational planning and conduct capability at the strategic level for non-executive military missions”, unquote. Therefore, I argue that we are well on track but definitely we have not reached the end. And I am optimist that the MPCC review that will be done by the end of 2018, will provide recommendations in this direction. The Military Committee, been the ultimate Subject Matter Expert on this issue, has and will continue to provide input and solid advice on how to best shape the EU military Chain of Command.

Evolution is also needed for the existing financing mechanisms, in order for them to remain relevant and support the respective changes in other domains. The establishment of EDF is a perfect example of a comprehensive approach to the capability development challenge. This spirit should also prevail in finding ways to strengthen the usability and deployability of the EU rapid response toolbox, in line with the November 2017 Council Conclusions. In
this respect, innovative and flexible solutions have to be found to ensure the Battlegroups adequate financing.

The European Union does not focus its efforts only on enhancing its Hard power. Similar efforts are also been undertaken in the civilian part of the house as well. Given the complexity of contemporary threats and challenges, EU responses include elements of both parts, in a well balanced mix. These two parts though, the civilian and the military need to communicate, coordinate and cooperate in an optimal way in order to avoid duplication of efforts and achieve maximised results. To this end, a Joint Support Coordination Cell has been foreseen to function as the link between the MPCC and its civilian counterpart, CPCC. This Cell will strengthen synergies between military and civilian missions that are deployed in the same region. This kind of joint-up approach can also be found in the intelligence domain, where civilian and military inputs are fused and produce a single, joint situational awareness.

Being in this military academic institution, I find it relevant to speak about another strand of work that contributes to the evolution of European Security and Defence. It is a strand of work that does not require huge budgets, or complex deliberations on the specifics of its governance. It is also one that can make a huge difference in the mid-term. I am talking about the creation of a shared European military identity among the future leaders of the respective national Armed Forces. To this end, the European Security and Defence College has created a course called Advanced Modular Training that is designed to achieve exactly that. Italy and Greece have quickly grasped the importance of this initiative, jointly shaped by the EU Military Committee and the College and offered to host the courses. General Graziano has been a firm believer of the value of this initiative and I thank him for his support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The EU Military Committee has been active and heavily engaged in the evolution of the European Security and Defence. From the drafting phase of the Global Strategy to providing military advices or input in the implementation phase of PESCO and EDF, a role has always been reserved for the EU military element. The Armed Forces of the Member-States, the end-user of any military capability that will be created by the newly-founded EU tools, will continue to provide their solid military advice through this Committee as requested.
Concluding my remarks, I need to stress that building a stronger Europe, in not an easy task. It cannot be achieved overnight and it certainly cannot be achieved without the investment of adequate resources. These include political capital, human capital, money and time. Persistence, patience and long-term planning should govern this endeavour. Continuity of effort should characterise it, keeping a fixed-eye to the stated end-state of the EU Global Strategy: a Stronger Europe. Chiefs and Commanders come and go, each of them contributing, as the Greek poet and Nobel Prize winner Giorgos Seferis said:

"Just a little more, let us rise a little higher".

In a few months' time, the responsibility of representing 28 Chiefs of Defence will be handed over to my friend, General Graziano. I know that he is up to the task and that he will continue the effort. I wholeheartedly wish him every success.

Thank you.

Edited by Captain (Hellenic Navy) Vasileios Loukovitis