General Officers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to be here today at the People's Liberation Army National Defence University. And it is at the same time a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to address fellow officers. Despite our different origins, we, the military, we speak the same "language". This language is a "bridge" that helps us come closer and understand each other. A "bridge" that can bring China and the European Union closer, for their mutual benefit.

I look forward to take this opportunity to establish a communication channel with your top level officials. A channel that will hopefully lead to a better understanding of each other.

There are three main points I want to make today:

- First of all, that the European Union is a credible, predictable and important **global** security actor;
- Second, that the European Union applies an Integrated Approach to establish and maintain security;
- And finally, that in doing so, and addressing the contemporary challenges and threats, the European Union seeks Co-operation and Partnership.
In this context, allow me to briefly introduce you to the Institution I represent. The European Union consists of 28 Member-States with more than 500 million citizens. It is a globally recognised entity, enjoying an "observer with enhanced participation rights" status at the United Nations General Assembly. It is the world's biggest trader, accounting for 16.5% of the world's imports and exports. The EU and its Member States are collectively the world's leading donor, providing over 50% of all global development aid, offering more than €75 billion annually. China is the EU's biggest source of imports and its second-biggest export market. China and Europe trade on average over €1 billion a day.

To manage the complex interplay of national and EU competences, there is a European Parliament, a European Commission, and an EU Council of Ministers. In the past seven years, the EU has developed an External Action Service to deal with EU foreign, security and defence matters; you may consider it as the EU Ministry of Foreign Affairs with responsibilities also extending into the area of Defence.

The EU maintains diplomatic relations with nearly all the countries in the world. It also has strategic partnerships with key international players, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United States. China is such a strategic partner, with the relationship between the two global powers described as an "enduring and mutually beneficial relationship of equals".

The European Union is represented worldwide as one entity. Therefore, it has to have one voice, one External Policy to follow. This is the **EU Common Security and Defence Policy**. The voice of the European Union is the High Representative. The High Representative leads the European External Action Service. He or she also chairs the meetings of the Defence Ministers. Considering this, it becomes evident that the High Representative functions not only as the "Minister of Foreign Affairs" of the European Union but also as its "Minister of Defence" in some aspects.

Every day work is performed by permanent bodies, such as the Political and Security Committee dealing with Common Foreign Policy and Common Security and Defence Policy. It consists of ambassadors from the EU Member-States. The military-related decisions taken at this political level are translated into actionable proposals at the Military Committee. With this structure, the working relationship between the political leadership and the military is clearly defined and the political oversight of the military is formally conducted.
As a single entity in the global geopolitics, the European Union must also have a single Strategy towards the global affairs. In 2003, the European Security Strategy offered an optimistic view of the world.

"Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history."

This phrase depicts the world as it was conceived at the beginning of the 21st century. This optimism and the euphoria around it resulted in defence budget cuts and great reductions in numbers of personnel and means. It also resulted in the loss of hard-earned defence capabilities, which were not considered necessary anymore.

In our times of growing tensions and geopolitical unpredictability, the description of the world is far less optimistic and bright.

“The purpose, even existence, of our Union is being questioned.[…] Our wider region has become more unstable and more insecure.”

This phrase can be found in HR/VP's foreword of the EU Global Strategy, presented in June 2016.

The EU Global Strategy is a keystone document that will guide the shaping of the EU foreign and security policy for the years to come. It identifies three priorities that have to be comprehensively put forward:

- **Respond** to external crises,
- **Build** the capacities of partners affected by crises and fragility, and
- **Protect** Europe.

And we moved on directly to its Implementation, with no waste of time.

The Implementation Plan on Security and Defence provides more specific details on how to jump-start European Defence. Four key deliverables of the Implementation Plan directly or indirectly tied to the military domain are currently being put forward. They are:
The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), a voluntary mechanism that will develop a more structured way to deliver identified capabilities, and that will promote enhanced defence cooperation,

An inclusive and ambiguous Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), that will uplift the level of cooperation among Member States, something that has already been provided for in the Treaties,

The creation of a European Defence Fund (EDF) that will provide financial support to joint research and to joint development and acquisition programmes, and

The establishment of a permanent planning and conduct capability (MPCC) for military missions and operations.

What is noteworthy in the Global Strategy is the acknowledgement of the need for the European Union to further develop its Hard Power and, as a result, its military instrument.

This may have surprised those not familiar with the European Union. The European Union is widely regarded as an institution with, mainly, financial and diplomatic characteristics. This is in general terms true, but it overlooks the fact that the European Union does already have a military element. Although nowhere as strong as its diplomatic or economic one, it is nonetheless present, supporting the EU's interests and contributing to the fulfilment of its strategic priorities. And I want to emphasise here, an element, not an Army. No global actor, be it a nation or a supranational organisation is complete if it does not have or if it neglects to develop its hard power, its military.

The European Union Military Committee, which I chair, is the highest military body set up within the Council. It is composed of the Chiefs of Defence of the Member States, who are on a daily basis represented by their permanent Military Representatives based in Brussels. The EUMC exercises military direction of all EU military activities and provides the Political and Security Committee with advice and recommendations on military matters.

As Chairman, I have been elected by the Chiefs of Defence of the Member-States and appointed by the Council for a three year term. I am the military adviser to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and
Security Policy on all military matters and the primary Point of Contact with the Operation Commanders of the EU's military operations.

Since 2003, the European Union has been launching military missions and operations to respond to external crises. In numerous occasions and in accordance with their mandates, the forces deployed have also been supporting the host nations in building their own capacities in the security and defence domains. So, responding to external crises and capacity building are not new tasks to us.

But, the "Protection of Europe" strategic priority has been a new one for the military, yet, one that should not surprise. At a time when our principles and values, our way of life, our very civilisation is under attack, we cannot remain passive. We have to react. It is both our right and our duty, as a global security provider.

In its reaction, the European Union makes use of the full spectrum of its Smart power. Here lies a big difference between the European Union and any other international or multinational actor. A difference which is also a comparative advantage: the European Union, having a multidimensional character, does have Smart power.

What exactly do we mean by this term? "Smart" power is the sum of:

- Its Diplomatic and Informational powers, which comprise the Soft power element,
- Its Military power which is the core and probably the greatest element of the Hard power, and
- Its Economic power which lies in between and can be regarded as both, depending on if we are talking about humanitarian or development aid, or about sanctions.

In the context of the European Union, its own Smart power is more than just the sum of those of the Member-States, as the European Union functions as a multiplying factor.

There is no better way to see the European Union's Smart power at play but through studying its Integrated Approach. By that term, "Integrated Approach", we refer to and we describe the way the European Union produces
unique responses to crises and conflicts, applying its **Soft** and its **Hard** power, combined. **Coordinated. Orchestrated. Well balanced to fit the purpose.**

Undoubtedly, the bulk of the European Union's **Smart** power stems mainly from its financial and diplomatic characteristics. The military instrument is also included to Common Security and Defence Policy responses to challenges, although its contribution has been kept at low levels. Nevertheless, it is the most versatile and adaptable instrument in the EU's toolbox.

At the operational level, the military instrument has long proved its efficiency and its ability to serve the political goals set through the respective mandates. As we speak, no less than six different Operations and Missions, both in land and at sea, in Africa as well as in Europe are ongoing. Almost 3.000 uniformed women and men are deployed. And this is the first time Europe has that many Operations and Missions ongoing simultaneously.

This means that, unfortunately, our assistance is needed. It is also a clear proof that the military is a powerful, as well as flexible tool in the hands of the policy-makers. In particular cases, as in the Horn of Africa, they are an integral part of the wider European Union effort. And sometimes, our troops pay the ultimate price for their being there. We should never forget this.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the way the military contributes to the protection of Europe. The troops participating in the CSDP missions and operations, together with their civilian counterparts, they provide something that is rarely outspoken or admitted; "**forward defence**". And as this term may make some people uneasy or uncomfortable, I will elaborate on this right away, explaining myself.

Security at home entails a parallel interest in peace and stability in our neighbouring and surrounding regions. The three EU-led military training missions in Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia, are an integral part of the European Union's Integrated Approach. An approach that brings together all the instruments available in the European toolbox, to perform an in-depth work, to tackle the root causes of instability, to build local capacities and to reform institutions.

Our work there aims at setting the ground for **sustainable, locally-owned security** which is a prerequisite for development efforts to flourish. And I put
emphasis on the sustainability and the local ownership elements of this security. The troops participating in these EU missions and operations do not provide security "per se" to the respective host nations but they are rather "founding" security. They are there to train and assist local Armed Forces build their own capacity to provide security in a responsible and professional way, adhering to the rule of law and to international conventions. By this they set the foundations for the gradual building of a development permitting environment.

Doing this, they provide "forward defence" for the European peoples, some thousand kilometres away from the physical European borders. They expand the safe and secure environment we enjoy and they become our first line of "proactive defence" that will prevent the local population from leaving home. And this will be by their own will, not because of fences or walls that will stop them. It will be because these people will have every good reason to stay in their country. Ultimately, our personnel help build a "security belt" where the "arc of instability" is now. As you understand, with our Integrated Approach, we try to create conditions for growth, development and hope. We do not impose restrictive measures; we build a better future. This is the reason I am proud of it.

I will briefly introduce you the EU military missions and operations.

- The EU Naval Operation Atalanta is tackling piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Indian Ocean since 2008. I suppose that you are familiar with this particular Mission, as PLAN has cooperated with our naval assets in the area numerous times, displaying admirable professionalism. We thank you for this. Since 2012 and until the spring of 2017, there had been no successful attempts. The alarming rate of piracy attempts during the last months proves that the piracy threat has not disappeared. Capability and intent are still present. The only thing preventing successful piracy attempts from occurring is denial of opportunity. This is what we are trying to achieve until a credible local anti-piracy force will allow us to terminate the Operation.

- In Somalia, the EU Training Mission is helping building up the new Somali Armed Forces. Over the past years, more than 5.000 Somali military personnel have been successfully trained and are now contributing to foster stability in their country alongside their African Union partners.
At the beginning of April 2014 the EU launched its operation EUFOR RCA in the **Central African Republic** upon request from the United Nations. Today, EUTM RCA is a Training Mission that followed and succeeded a successful Advisory one.

In **Mali**, the EU is assisting the Malian authorities in building up their own professional military capabilities. About 550 military personnel from 22 EU Member States and five partners are engaged in the professional training and the provision of advice to the Malian Ministry of Defence. As of today 8 Malian battalions have been trained. **PLA is also present in Mali, under UN auspices, where they suffered casualties as we did.**

Since June 2015, a large maritime operation has been launched in the **Southern Central Mediterranean**, Operation Sophia. The aim of this military operation is to identify, capture and dispose of vessels as well as enabling assets used, or suspected of being used, by migrant smugglers or traffickers. Twenty six EU Member States contribute to this operation. Operationally, the EUNAVFOR MED assets conduct boarding, search, seizure and diversion, on the high seas, of vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking. On 25 July 2017, the Council extended Operation Sophia’s mandate until the end of 2018, amending it to:

- Set up of a **monitoring mechanism of trainees** to ensure the long-term efficiency of the training of the Libyan Coastguard;
- Conduct **new surveillance activities** and gather information on **illegal trafficking of oil exports from Libya**;
- Enhance the possibilities for **sharing information on human trafficking** with member states' law enforcement agencies, FRONTEX and EUROPOL.

Last, but certainly not least, let me also mention the EU’s military engagement in Europe, in the Balkans, in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** where the EU-led Operation ALTHEA has guaranteed a safe and secure environment for the
population for more than 13 years now. The main objectives of Operation ALTHEA are:

- To provide **capacity-building and training** to the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- To support BiH efforts to maintain the **safe and secure environment** in BiH;
- To provide support to the overall **EU comprehensive strategy** for BiH.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I talked to you earlier about the Security Belt the European Union is trying to create in Africa, as a concerned, credible and predictable global security provider. I showed you a map with the countries where **our** missions and operations are deployed. This is another map of Africa, displaying the European Union and the Chinese engagement in the continent. We **both** deploy our forces under a UNSC mandate. China is the biggest "blue helmets" contributor among the 5 permanent members of the Security Council. Both the European Union and China invest not only with forces but also with huge amounts of money to the security and development of African nations.

**Cooperation** is one of the key words that you will find in the Global Strategy. Cooperation is vital and partnership is essential. And this is particularly true for partnership among the world powers. Cooperation between our naval Operation Atalanta and the PLAN, off the Horn of Africa, has already been incredibly effective in the fight against piracy. But there is a huge potential for **more** cooperation between us that goes unexploited, in **Mali, for instance or in Somalia**. This cooperation would lead to a "**win-win-win**" situation. I said **three** times the word "win" not by mistake. I mean, win for China, win for the European Union, **but primarily, win for Africa**!

In these times of geopolitical turbulence and uncertainties we are living, the world can only benefit from cooperation between China and the European Union. The European Union and China are both global players: we have a joint responsibility to work together.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that by now it has become clear that the European Union really intends to become a stronger and credible global security provider. What the European Union does NOT want to do is to be alone in this effort, to bring more security and stability to the world. It is something that no single nation or organisation can do. It has to be a joint effort.

The Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU is an open project. Partnerships can build upon the knowledge, expertise and specific capabilities of partners. Therefore, the EU is firmly committed to working in close collaboration with partners. Nine partner countries, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Georgia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey, are contributing to our military missions and operations with about 260 troops. I thank them for this.

Coming to the end of my presentation, I have shown to you how and why:

- The European Union is a credible, predictable and important global security actor;
- that the European Union applies an Integrated Approach to establish and maintain security;
- And finally, that the European Union seeks Co-operation and Partnership.

Concluding, my final key take-aways are the following:

- The European Union is a big and essential global actor. Its power mainly derives from its diplomatic and economic might, comprising its Soft Power.
- Protecting Europe is a strategic priority for the Union.
- It requires a balanced development of its Hard Power to complement and support the Soft Power it already possesses.
- To better and more efficiently succeed in this, Member-States must work together. Together they can be seen as a credible and powerful global actor. Alone, they are weak.
European Union's trademark is the Integrated Approach, a unique and balanced usage of all tools available in the European Union's toolbox. This includes the military, the Hard power element. Together with the Soft power one, they give flesh to the Integrated Approach. They constitute the European Union's Smart power, of which I am proud.

We expand our Safe and Secure Environment some thousands of miles deeper in Africa and Asia providing "forward defence". We create proper living conditions for the local population to stay home and a security belt for the region and beyond.

Closing my remarks let me offer you a phrase from the rich culture of my country, Greece. It is a phrase that has been saved for future generations by an ancient Greek historian, Thucydides and it is attributed to Pericles. This phrase describes the ancient Athenians, as they were perceived by their enemies. The phrase goes:

"[They are] bold beyond their strength,
adventurous above their own reason,
and in danger [they] hope still the best."

This phrase should serve as the guiding light throughout your entire career. I invite you to think this over.

I would like to wish you all, every success in your career and your personal endeavours. I am confident that the future of the People's Liberation Army will continue to be in good hands.

Thank you.