



**The Chairman of the  
European Union Military Committee  
General Claudio GRAZIANO**



**Security and Defence Sub Committee**

*"Exchange of views with General Claudio Graziano,  
Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (EUMC)"*

*(Speech actually delivered may differ from text)*

Thank you Chair, Honourable Members,

- Good morning.
- First of all thank you for the invitation to be here with you today.
- It's an honour, and i take it as a sign of the great attention you are giving to the value of the advice provided by the military component of the Union, in the processes related to security and defence.
- As many of you know, the EUMC, the Committee I chair, and for which I also act as Spokesperson, is made of the Chiefs of Defence of all EU Member States, who meet either personally or through their Military Representatives.
- Our Committee provides continuous advice to the political authorities on military matters, making sure that the voice of the end-users of military capabilities is heard among the EU institutions and incorporated into the decision-making process within the Council.
- I also act as the primary point of contact for all operation commanders.
- I engage in mil-to-mil diplomacy, and, very relevant, I am the Military Advisor to the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, for any military-related matter.

- And in particular because of this role, that I have a responsibility to closely monitor the evolution of the scenario we live in, and to propose my advices.
- Today, in order to properly discuss the topic of defence capabilities initiatives, allow me to start by sketching for you my perception on the current security and defence situation.
- The New Year did not start as most of us wished for, unfortunately.
- The events in Libya and Iraq were not a surprise, as we knew the symptoms were there.
- But is the magnitude of their medium and long term effects that remain to be discovered.
- In fact, both those crises will have many direct repercussions, regionally but also for the whole international community.
- A combination of the Butterfly Effect with the Domino Effect.
- We are talking about new threats adding to the traditional ones, most of which now coming from the south, from Libya to Sahel, pushing us to rebalance our attention in the direction of the immediate danger, the infamous triangle made of a revamping of international terrorism, fed also by foreign fighters, increased and irregular migration waves, and degraded security in the whole region, with failed states and lack of governance.
- And let's remind all of us, that the future of Europe goes also through Libya and connected regions like the Sahel, as recently underlined by the HRVP, Mr Borrell.
- And to complicate the already chaotic situation, new interferences add extra incognita, like the one from Russia or Turkey, or maybe

China, seeking their role, pursuing their strategies, often filling gaps left by others.

- For this and many other reasons, there is a need for a quick and strong reaction, before the situation reaches a point of no return.
- But the question is: who should take the initiative?
- Well, it is now obvious that no single nation (without second interests!) is fitted (or legitimated!) to take on board all these challenges.
- Therefore, these crises have definitely put an extra burden of responsibility on the shoulder of the international community.
- And on us! as European Union, demanding a proactive approach.
- It's a fact: there is a clear urgency to act, and the EU institutions have recognised it, loud and clear.
- But also the world has understood the role of the EU, expecting the union to confirm itself as a global player.
- As a stronger European Union.
- Therefore we must act decisively, also to avoid - I repeat - that the security vacuum unfilled by UN, EU or NATO becomes the target of single actors.
- It's an opportunity for the EU.
- An opportunity not to miss.
- In fact, our Union, counting on a unique toolbox that includes political, diplomatic, economic and military means, is the organization best positioned to react in these situations, intervening as a global security provider, autonomously or as a partner, in the pure spirit of its Global Strategy.
- Especially if these crises affect our own, close neighbourhood!

- Of course - and I speak as a military - I do believe that today's crisis cannot be addressed with only one of those tools in isolation, but with a balanced mix of them.
- On the other hand, recent history teaches us that when we seek for diplomatic solutions between contenders, we often need to establish a security framework, using military means as an enabler, allowing dialogue to take place.
- I want to be clear: talking about a military tool as an enabler does not directly mean to engage in combat, of course!
- It means, I repeat, to be able to count on something that has often proven to be instrumental or complementary for other tools to come into the game, or to support and monitor the different phases and developments of a crisis, up to de-escalation and return to normality.
- The HR said it two days ago: you cannot just declare the ceasefire and leave!
- You need to protect the conditions and monitor the implementation.
- In fact, as an example, the EU is considering to fully reactivate Operation Sophia, with those naval assets currently missing and critical to enforce the arms embargo...
- By revitalizing a mission already on track like Sophia, the EU will send a strong, unique signal of cohesion and determination, acknowledging the sense of urgency raised from many sides.
- But if you want to act, now, or to be ready to act, in the future, a fundamental requisite is to possess the capacity and capabilities for the mission.

- As far as the capacity or will to act, the EU must show unity of intent, solve ideological obstacles that hamper the cooperation EU-NATO, or improve multilateral cooperation with all relevant actors willing to act in synergy for shared objectives.
- But in order to compete with our adversaries in the security scenario, we also need to have the proper tools and capabilities.
- In this context, I must say, the EU has done an incredible amount of progress, in the last 4-5 years, crafting and agreeing on a series of truly innovative security and defence initiatives.
- From the Headline Goal Process, which translated the EU's political level of ambition into military terms, to other initiatives like PESCO, CARD, the EDIPD and the EDF.
- Worth to note, as a true success story, is also the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), a unique tool for planning, conducting and monitoring our military missions.
- But among the mentioned initiatives, the EDF has attracted much interest, also by our Committee, for the great potential impact on the Europe of Defense.
- The EDF, I duly remind you, is a mechanism designed to provide the means and the financial support in the field of research and development, making cooperation more attractive to participating states.
- One of the clear objectives is to contribute to the improvement of European defence cooperation, avoiding waste of resources or duplication of efforts, including from an industrial point of view.
- In fact, it must be remembered that the EDF sets the ground for the EU defence industry to retain in Europe the know-how and those

critical defence research and development capacities, which are instrumental for a long-term strategic autonomy.

- Additionally, EDF constitutes a most valuable and effective factor for better cooperation in a strategic domain until now untouched by European initiatives.
- And it's paramount to remember that what we will achieve with the EDF will be beneficial also for NATO.
- In my opinion, therefore, the EDF constitutes a milestone in our path as European Union, one of the best investments for the Europe of Defence to come.
- And this is why I truly believe it would be a blind move if we would even consider a cut of the resources foreseen for the EDF.
- During our last meeting, all Chiefs of Defence welcomed the progresses on this and other work strands, stressing their value and highlighting the strong need to bring coherence, consolidating existing activities, capturing relevant lessons and achieving tangible results, before introducing new ones.
- In this regard, I would like to point out the peculiar double role that the military have for all Defence Processes.
- Firstly, at a strategic level, providing our continuous and unfettered military expertise and advice, supporting the EU and the MS decision making.
- Secondly, as main customers and primary users of the products that those processes will deliver.
- As you can imagine, covering both the mentioned roles puts an extra weight of responsibility on us, the military component of the Union.

- But it's a responsibility we gladly take on board, because of our specific expertise in the field.
- And this is why the military component of the Union, at different level of engagement, is involved in all the process.
- In reality, while the MC is fully plugged into initiatives like PESCO or CARD, when we talk about EDF, I think that a way could be found for MC to be more active and present in the EDF mechanism, in the form of an unfettered military advice.
- From our side, I can ensure that the Military Committee is closely following the developments and is always ready to provide its military input to the concerned decision makers.
- In fact, we do look at those initiatives with great interest and expectations, acknowledging the value of the outcomes as key enablers for our military missions and operations, which in turn continue to provide high visibility to EU foreign policy.
- This common approach in EU defence - I duly remind - requires a pragmatic balance between collective efforts and sovereign responsibilities in implementing what some call the European Defence Union, able to achieve the envisaged level of Strategic Autonomy and the ability to speak and act with a single voice.
- Furthermore, having adequate capabilities at our disposal could also contribute to the ongoing review of our missions, possibly making them more robust, moving - for instance - from a basic training role to a mentoring and accompanying one.
- This would not only create more efficient military CSDP activities on the ground, but also create the perception of more influential and effective EU activities in the eyes of our partners, member states,

international community and, why not, our adversaries and strategic competitors.

- In coherence and collaboration also with NATO, of course.
- And I conclude:
- First of all, thank you once more for the opportunity to elaborate on these topics. I hope I was able to give you an idea of our approach to security and defence issues, particularly in reference to current affairs.
- Additionally, let me reiterate once more the unconditional availability by military matter experts to respond at every level with timely advice, placing our experience at the service of the cause.
- An experience built on the ground, which can be a truly priceless resource.
- Once more, many thanks Chair and Honourable Members.
- I stand ready for your questions, if any...