Good afternoon.

I will start my intervention by saying a few words on the role and prerogatives of the EU Military Committee, or EUMC, including my responsibilities.

The EUMC was set up with a Council Decision in January 2001, and since then it has been and still is actively engaged in the evolution of European Security and Defence, by providing concrete recommendations and advice on matters of military concern.

The aim is to ensure that the voice of the end-users of military capabilities is heard among the EU institutions, and it is incorporated into the decision-making process at all stages, levels and phases of the evolution of the CSDP.

Accordingly, the EUMC has been also involved both at the conceptual and the implementation phase of the EU Global Strategy, which is an ambitious and realistic framework launched in 2016 to develop the Common Security and Defence Policy, or CSDP, consistently with the evolving global security situation and with the aim to better address emerging threats and opportunities.
• In my capacity as Chairman, I am responsible for the conduct of the EUMC meetings in which the Chiefs of Defence of all 28 EU Member States convene personally or through their Military Representatives; thereby I act as the spokesperson of all Chiefs of Defence and I am also the Military Advisor to the High Representative.

• In addition to acting as the primary point of contact with the Commanders of the EU-led military operations, I attend the meetings of the Council of the EU when decisions with defence implications are to be taken.

• This also means taking part in the meetings of the Political and Security Committee with the right to contribute to discussions, as well as liaising with the Presidency of the Council in the development and implementation of its work programme.

(1. CSDP foundations and the on-going military Missions and Operations)

• Now, to better outline the military aspects of the Common Security and Defence Policy, or CSDP, it is worth noting that its foundations have been developing intermittently throughout the whole history of the European Union.

• The first attempts to establish such a common policy indeed occurred in the '50s.

• For historical reasons they were not developed during the Cold War, but we have seen acceleration in this regard since 1996, when at the NATO Summit in Berlin the Allies agreed to develop a European Security and Defence Identity, or ESDI.

• The St. Malo declaration in 1998 signalled that the traditionally hesitant United Kingdom was prepared to provide the EU with autonomous defence structures, which facilitated the transformation of the ESDI into the European Security and Defence Policy in 1999, when it was transferred to the EU.

• In 2003 the EU deployed its first CSDP missions, and adopted the European Security Strategy identifying common threats and objectives. In 2009, the Treaty of Lisbon introduced the present name, CSDP, while establishing the European External Action Service (EEAS).

• All these steps bring us to the EU Global Strategy, and to the significant efforts that are currently put in place to implement its provisions, which on the military side is mostly done through the EU-led Operations and missions, that are carried out thanks to the contributions of Member States and in close cooperation with the CSDP civilian missions in some of the most complex and dangerous areas of the world.
• Accordingly, many soldiers from EU Member States are actively engaged in our near neighbourhood, such as the Balkans and also further away in Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR) as well as the vessels and aircraft deployed in the Mediterranean Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

• On a broader perspective, the African continent is where the EU is focusing its main effort, as the root causes of many existing challenges lie there and this calls for the EU to act consistently with its primary interest, the security and prosperity of Europe, by promoting welfare and security at source.

• In relation to the multidimensional threats and challenges that we are currently facing, I would briefly clarify my vision on them and to give you an example of how those threats and challenges are interlinked and deeply affecting our perceptions.

• Especially within the African continent, the “triangular” relationship between the variables - Terrorism-Migration-Instability - retains particular importance and requires governments and international organisations to tackle the ensuing security challenges by systematically targeting the three variables.

• Although there is not a direct connection between terrorism and migration, and recalling that immigrants as such are not criminals, we cannot mitigate the consequences of migration without supporting the countries of origin, be it through capacity building measures or through support to their fight against terrorism.

• Recalling what I’ve just said about the need to address root causes in Africa, not by chance all the 3 military training missions are conducted in the African continent, as well as 2 out of the 3 CSDP military operations are carried out in the seas around it.

• The oldest of the operations is ALTHEA in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is aimed to contribute to a safe and secure environment through the use of the NATO command structure at military strategic level, in accordance with the so called Berlin Plus arrangements, thereby providing a formal link for cooperation between EU and NATO.

• Operation SOPHIA in the Mediterranean, which has been recently extended until the end of September 2019, it is mainly aimed at disrupting the business model of illegal smuggler and arms and human traffickers from Libya to Europe, and at training the Libyan coastguard in order to build its capacity to counter illegal activities.
• Operation ATALANTA in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean has achieved excellent operational results over the 10 years of its existence, protecting World Food Programme transports and other vulnerable shipping from piracy at sea and also offering an important platform for cooperation with Third States.

• For example, South Korea is regularly participating with a frigate and the operation is coordinating activities at sea with China and the United States.

• I imagine that you are all well informed of the recent move of the headquarters of Operation ATALANTA from the United Kingdom to Rota in Spain and to Brest in France due to the BREXIT, therefore I do not intend to touch on it.

• The 3 non-executive missions in Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia are providing training to the local armed forces and advice to the military leadership.

• Many positive results have been achieved despite very difficult circumstances in complex and often dangerous situations, and also despite very limited manning of the headquarter functions compared to other operations or organisations (such as the UN).

• Across the 6 missions and operations we have also longstanding problems matching the operational needs with the contribution of forces, funds and other assets.

• Drawing from my personal experience on the ground as Battalion Commander in Mozambique, Multinational Brigade Commander in Afghanistan in NATO's ISAF and as Force Commander for UNIFIL in Lebanon, I know very well the problems this brings to the Commanders in the field.

• In this regard, the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability, or MPCC, in 2017 was a very positive step forward for the three training missions. This has given them a specific headquarters to cope with the political level here in Brussels and lets the 3 Mission Force Commanders focus on the tasks in theatre.

• The MPCC also provides a wider capacity of developing cooperative activities with other actors on the field such as the United Nations and the African Union, which is very hard for the Mission Force Commanders due to the limited staff at their disposal.

• We are now moving ahead, expanding the capacity of this headquarters function to also be able to lead smaller executive operations, and reinforcing the Joint Support Coordination Cell to assure synergies with our civilian missions.
• This more synergic approach can also be found in the intelligence domain, where civilian and military inputs are fused and produce a single, joint situational awareness.

• Equally important to clarify, is that the MPCC does not constitute a duplication of NATO's command structure, and that it does not replace the national headquarters that currently form the backbone of the EU command structure.

• As regards the lack of financial resources, the issue is mainly due to the limitations to an optimal use of EU funds stemming from the existing EU rules and mechanisms for funding of military activities, which clearly limit the impact of our efforts.

• Despite the great achievements made by the Commanders in the field so far, this aspect is deeply affecting the effectiveness of the 3 training missions due to the inability to provide equipment and infrastructure to the troops we are training.

• In summary, we have a double challenge: First to unlock the EU limitation on funding EU operations and missions and second to find the right incentive for MS to show greater solidarity and commit more personnel and resources to them.

• Another issue based on my field experience is the fact that both the EU and its Member States are often engaged in parallel in the same theatre. All efforts made by Member States to increase the stability in Africa are very much appreciated.

• However, while we struggle to resource our EU-led missions we should also seek better integration among the various initiatives in the different frameworks such as UN and national operations.

(2. The EU Global Strategy and its main deliverables)

• Ladies and Gentlemen, as a result of the unceasing efforts made over the past years to implement the EU Global Strategy, we have set the basis for a new security and defence architecture for Europe.

• The December 2016 European Council endorsed a raised Level of Ambition for the Union's security and defence, with the aim of enabling the European Union to meet European citizens' security needs as well as the expectations of its partners.

• To achieve this, the EU is gradually establishing itself and playing its role as a credible global security provider, not just as a trading partner.
• This new identity and role didn't come from nowhere, but from the growing awareness that no Member State can address these challenges alone and that the EU collectively has the tools to tackle them.

• The most advertised tools stemming from the Implementation of the EU Global Strategy are in the area of Defence Capability Development, as the fulfilment of the Level of Ambition is conditional upon the possession of the relevant capabilities.

• Now I will briefly describe some of the most important tools related to the deliverables of the EU Global Strategy.

• **The Permanent Structured Cooperation, or PESCO.** is a Treaty-based framework and process to create deeper and more integrated cooperation among Member States who are capable and willing to do so. The aim is to jointly develop defence capabilities and make them available for EU military operations.

• While the membership of PESCO is only for those Member States who have undertaken the ensuing commitments, Third States might eventually participate.

• **The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, or CARD.** is a tool aimed at better coordinating and synchronising defence planning among Member States. Careful mapping of defence spending and capability planning will facilitate coordination of efforts and the establishment of collaborative projects.

• CARD will help foster the capability development addressing shortfalls, and it will also deepen defence cooperation and ensure more optimal use, including coherence, of defence spending plans. Such a mutual adaptation of national defence planning cycles and capability development practices will help enhancing the strategic convergence between Member States.

• **The European Defence Fund, or EDF.** and **the European Defence Industry Development Programme, or EDIDP.** come to complement the previous tools.

• They will make cooperation more attractive, by providing financial support to eligible defence research projects and joint development and acquisition projects.

• Finally, **the European Peace Facility, or EPF.** which I consider one of the most important initiatives, is aimed boosting the EU's security and defence capabilities which may also make force generation easier.
• The EPF is an honest attempt to establish a comprehensive funding mechanism by regrouping the existing financing instruments, with a view to make a better use of them and, at the same time, widen their scope.
• The EUMC has significantly contributed to bringing all these initiatives forward, with a particular focus on developing the necessary military capabilities for sustaining and enhancing CSDP and thereby fulfilling the agreed level of ambition.
• Fundamental to this work has been the identification of the overall military requirements as well as the specific capability shortfalls as contributions to the Capability Development Plan (CDP) led by the European Defence Agency (EDA).
• To summarise, we could say that the CDP tells us what to focus our common efforts on, the CARD gives us an overview of where do we stand and identifies next steps, PESCO in turn gives us options on how to do it in a collaborative manner, while the EDF could provide the funds to support the implementation of eligible cooperative defence projects in general, but with a bonus if in PESCO.

(3. Conclusions on EU Strategic Autonomy and its complementarity with NATO)

• Before going to the conclusions, I would like to focus on the notion of Strategic Autonomy stemming from the EU Global Strategy.
• First and foremost, it is worth noting that the EU and NATO share basic values, interests and most of the respective members and that strengthening the European pillar is a clear strategic goal for NATO itself and a long-lasting demand by the US.
• Therefore, the EU defence initiatives are clearly meant to reinforce NATO and to seek for complementarity, rather than to undermine the Alliance or to compete with it.
• On the upside, it is also true that in order to act consistently with the provisions of the Global Strategy the EU has to take more responsibility and therefore it needs to have greater autonomous capacity to conduct a wide range of military operations, with partners whenever and wherever possible but also alone when necessary.
• This doesn't mean that the EU will reduce its efforts in seeking for wider and more effective partnerships. On the contrary, the Global Strategy itself clearly states the utmost importance for the EU to engage with others and to reject any attempt of retreating or building walls, with the aim of promoting the security and prosperity of EU citizens and to safeguard our democracies in a more connected world.
• To achieve this, an even more intensive dialogue is promoted by the EU with all relevant international partner countries and organisations, to start from NATO and the United Nations.

• **Military Mobility within and beyond the EU** provides us with an excellent example of the afore mentioned complementarity, as both the EU and NATO have worked together in the early stages of the process of defining the military requirements, which are the core issue of the contribution provided by the EU Military Committee to allow the Commission to advance its work.

• The new impetus given to the EU-NATO cooperation and the importance attached to the deepening of a strong transatlantic dimension are the main aspects of the renewed efforts to develop a proper Defence domain within the European Union.

• The constant and mutual engagement between the EU and NATO is also reflected in the excellent relations between the respective Military Committees, through a constant and mutual exchange of information, with particular focus on the Western Balkans which represents a high priority for both Organisations.

• Concluding my address, I would like to reiterate that the creation a Common Security and Defence Policy stems from a long-standing project thanks to the foresight of the founding fathers of the European Union, who even at their time had realized the necessity and the importance of pooling the efforts in order to better guarantee the security of European citizens.

• What the European Union has lacked until now is the actual willingness of all its Member States to actively operate to work actively for the completion of such an ambitious and necessary project. To achieve this it is definitely appropriate to have no longer only a national but also a pro-European identity.

• Europe is not remote. As Altiero SPINELLI wrote "It is a hard and difficult road, in which it is necessary a concentration of thoughts and of willingness to seize the opportunities when they arise, to face the debacles when they occur, to decide to continue when necessary".

• I hope that I have been able to provide you with a sufficiently broad and comprehensive picture, I thank you for your attention and I hand the floor to Commodore HELSETH and to General DILANS for the ensuing debate.