Chairman of the European Union Military Committee

CEUMC Speech at the 3rd High Level Seminar for Partner Countries

A military view on CSDP partnerships; the role of the EUMC

Brussels, 13 July 2017

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to address this distinctive audience. An audience that represents countries from all over the world and a number of very important international organisations as well.

This high level seminar is very important, as it aims to inform you, our partners, of what is the state of play inside the European Union, on the perspectives for the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) following the European Council of June 2017.

It is widely accepted that the contemporary challenges to the international rules-based system cannot be tackled by any nation or organisation acting on its own. The very nature of the international system as it stands today, so chaotically interconnected in countless ways make sure of this. The same holds truth with the nature of the challenges themselves. They are not purely military or civilian, not exclusively internal to a country or external. They are all of these at the same time. Their repercussions and their side-effects are dispersed into almost every domain of human activity in our societies. They challenge our values, they put the cohesion of our societies at risk, they threaten the way we chose to live. The only way to be effective in addressing these challenges that know no borders or respect sovereignty is to join forces against them. To work **together**. Your presence here underlines the interest of the nations and organisations you represent to do just that.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
I represent 28 Chiefs of Defence. Their Armed Forces combined form the second biggest military power globally. Two of these nations are Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council and are in possession of nuclear capabilities. Yet, we turn to you to contribute to our CSDP Missions and Operations. We do this for three reasons:

- **First** of all, because we do face critical shortfalls. We do lack certain strategic enablers. Your provision of specific capabilities and of valuable assets makes the fulfilment of the respective mission's or operation's mandate easier or even, possible.¹

- **Second**, but not a bit less important, because the message transmitted by our respective flags flying side by side is powerful. It illustrates our mutual commitment to build security and bring stability to crisis-affected countries. It underlines that although we may be geographically apart, there are strong things, ideas, values, that bring us closely together. It displays our commitment to see this task through, sticking behind universal values that unite us. Therefore, it is not just a matter of numbers of troops, or size of the unit. Images are as powerful a tool as any; let's not forget how effectively they have been used for evil reasons.

- **Third**, because we want to learn from you, as you may want to learn from us. We want to work together with like-minded nations and share best practises to our mutual benefit. And, in the process, we want to better understand each other and build confidence and trust, these indispensable keystones in international relations. Confidence and trust that will replace cautiousness and make our relations stronger.

Today, more than 250 troops from eight partner nations participate in our missions and operations. In alphabetical order, these nations are Albania,  

¹ Medical support provided by Serbia for the EUTMs, force protection provided by Georgia to EUMAM and EUTM RCA, naval unit (frigate) provided by the Republic of Korea for EUNAFOR ATALANTA.
Chile, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Montenegro, *(the Republic of Korea)*, *(the Republic of Moldova)*, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey. They perform all that I have just described to you. We are grateful for this. As a result of the EU Military Committee's outreach activities, another two nations have expressed their readiness to join forces with us, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Jordan, bringing their own expertise and unique capabilities on the table. We thank you for this. More nations are considering at various levels to follow this example; we encourage and welcome them.

It is **together** that we take the fight to the heart of the problem. Instead of waiting until the repercussions of instability and volatility reach our border, we tackle the root causes of instability right where they are. **Together**, does not include just the troops of the European Union and yours. It also includes the civilian personnel of CSDP non-military missions, with whom we help build a better future for the local population. **Together** includes the United Nations missions but at the same time those of China and the United States of America which are deployed in the same region with us. Practical cooperation in the field produces results; we should seek ways to make it better.

The EU Military Committee, the highest military body set up within the European Council which I chair, is open to dialogue with all interested nations. As the body of the Chiefs of the Defence of the Member-States, it is the forum where the top uniformed figures assemble to exchange views on contemporary challenges and future trends. It is also the source of robust military advice to the Political and Security Committee. In this regard, it has been extremely active during the last twelve months, since the presentation of the EU Global Strategy on Security and Defence Policy by the High Representative, Madam Mogherini. The input we have provided, in the form of military advices or Food for Thought Papers, influenced decisions made at the political level, supporting views, expressing concerns, presenting ideas and providing options.

A number of your respective Chiefs of Defence have been invited in the past and honoured us with their presence. COM/AFRICOM has joined us at the last meetings, a proof of the continuously strengthened cooperation between us. This approach will continue to be followed. We intend to keep our six-monthly Committees at the level of Chief of Defence as open to third countries as possible, restraint only by administrative modalities and time limitations, to
assist in fulfilling the Global Strategy's objective for a more strategic approach to CSDP partnership cooperation with partner countries. We believe that information sharing on respective work and planning on security and defence and fostering common understanding on security challenges is paramount.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The European Union is a credible and predictable global actor. Both of these characteristics stem by its foundation on universal values. In a world of predictable unpredictability, this makes the Union the partner of choice when it comes down to building sustainable security and defence. And for us, partnering is our preferred way of interacting in a globalised environment.

Thank you.

Edited by Captain (GRC/N) Vasileios Loukovitis