

GLOBSEC EUROPEAN SECURITY INITIATIVE

EUROPEAN DEFENCE AT A CROSSROADS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GLOBSEC European Security Initiative builds on the expertise acquired and momentum of the GLOBSEC NATO Adaptation Initiative (GNAI) seeking to shape policy debates that decrease the imbalance in transatlantic defence capabilities. The primary objective of the GESI Initiative is to produce innovative and straightforward policy recommendations that empower Europe's defence capabilities and operational readiness for a wide spectrum of challenges. GESI mission is not to support the creation of parallel European military-political structures to NATO, but rather to propose an avenue for a new level of European defence competence.

GLOBSEC European Security Initiative Steering Committee

General Knud Bartels (Ret.) – Danish Chief of Defence, Staff 2009-2011, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee 2012-2015

General Wolf-Dieter Langheld (Ret.) – Commander Allied Joint Forces Headquarters, Brunssum 2010-2012

Ambassador Rastislav Káčer – Ambassador (Ret.) to the United States and Hungary, Honorary Chairman of GLOBSEC

Ambassador Stefano Stefanini – Ambassador (Ret.), Permanent Representative of Italy to NATO and Diplomatic Advisor to the President of Italy, Giorgio Napolitano 2007-2010

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The aim of European Defence is to enhance the European role and participation in ensuring security in the Euro-Atlantic space and in its neighbourhood. To this end the European Union needs to raise its commitment to contribute to European Defence in full synergy and coordination with NATO and in close and open cooperation with non-EU European countries and allies, in particular with the post-Brexit United Kingdom.

European Defence's ultimate goal should not be the **"DeNATOization of Europe"** but to strengthen the Atlantic Alliance through the **"Europeanization of NATO."** The case for European Defence is overwhelming – Europeans need a defence and security capacity that they only partially possess. The rationale for moving forward is self-explanatory: prosperous democracies must be able to adequately protect themselves and their citizens from external threats. Security cannot be fully subcontracted – even to a staunch and reliable ally. However, European Defence needs NATO and will not be credible without NATO at its core. ***The more European Defence in NATO, the more NATO will defend the Europeans.***

The key elements of the strategy for the EU and their Allies to achieve this goal should be:

1. **NATO to remain as the "Cornerstone" of European collective security.** For European Defence to become credible, NATO needs to stay in Europe together with European Defence.
2. **EU-NATO cooperation is crucial.** *Remarkable and extremely encouraging progress has been made in the last two years by the two organisations under the stewardship of High Representative Federica Mogherini and Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.* European Defence must build on it and take it further.
3. **Keep the Brits in.** Without the United Kingdom the EU loses approximately a quarter of its overall military capabilities (not to mention one of its two nuclear powers and Permanent Member of the UN Security Council). The UK must be a fully-fledged participant either by creating a larger-than-EU Security sphere which should also include countries such as Norway and Turkey or by a specific EU-UK bilateral agreement. *Such agreements should also be extended to include an open door to participation in EU initiatives such as PESCO & the implementation of the European Defence Fund (EDF) on a "pay to play" basis.*
4. **Come to terms with the changing global realities.** Looking ahead, European security needs also to be placed in a global fast changing strategic context. In a scenario of heightened military confrontation between the US and China in the Indo/Pacific area the responsibility of standing up to Russia in the Atlantic/Arctic area would fall mainly on European allies and Canada with probably a reduced American support due to the impact of this military Asian pivot. *Such division of labour would be fully consistent with the Washington Treaty. It can be addressed only by gradually building a credible European Defence.*

5. Move forward in measured steps. Strategic autonomy, and a much more security proactive Europe, can only be achieved incrementally in measured steps to develop real capability with realistic ambitions. What matters is the goal: to give the Europeans the ability that currently they do not have, or have only in a very limited way to engage a peer enemy in high intensity operations over a long period of time. This is what “strategic autonomy” should be about. It implies that the European Union needs to develop military capabilities that would allow European countries to meet certain areas of security challenges without NATO.

6. Work towards a rational and realistic division of labour. The European Union should take the lead in addressing security challenges that cannot be met with military means only and/or require a civilian/military mix of responses. We are not starting from scratch. From the Balkans to Africa the EU has built a good track record in relatively “soft” security missions mixing military footprint and civilian assistance and in focused operations such as the Atalanta counter piracy mission. The security problems arising from the South, by no means negligible, involve non-State actors. Solutions cannot be found in traditional military deterrence only; they must confront an array of complex issues related to state governance, political instability and economic development. NATO cannot do the South alone. *Hence a gap to fill and a role for an enhanced European Defence, and specifically for EU’s contribution to it.*

7. Avoid duplications, allow flexibility, create additional capabilities. The EU should aim at a “light” structure option and avoid duplicating the NATO Command Structure. Given the limited resources available, attempts at duplicating would only lead to two *depleted* Command Structures - *better to integrate and “Double Hat” appointees than burden nations with increasing the number of staff/command appointments they need to fill.* Flexible, adjustable and scalable structures are best suited to integrate in the European Defence national ownership and coalition of the willing model, as needed and available. Initiatives such as the E21, can more easily accommodate national interests and different security priorities than a single unified structure with lengthy decision times.

8. Accept the 2% as a necessity and move on. Increased defence spending is indispensable, especially by the countries that lag behind the NATO target of GDP 2%. However, it will not be sufficient if issues related to defence spending efficiency (procurement, mobility, standardization, coordination etc.) are not adequately addressed and if the EU Industrial base is not consolidated and strengthened. *Europeans need to spend more **and** better on defence and security. It will only be sustainable if the European Defence Industry is a beneficiary and if the EU industrial base is consolidated and strengthened, notably through European Defence Agency’s (EDA’s) current endeavours and the financial resources of the new EDF.*

9. Translate European commitment into national implementation. European governments have in fact agreed to do quite a few things on defence, witness progress being made with PESCO. Member States now have to deliver on their commitments by embedding those promises, policies and processes at home in their national defence establishments and among their military planners.

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10. If we had to **summarise in three points what is required** for European Defence to succeed, three concurring elements will be essential:

- ▶ a common strategic culture among European partners, meaning a common understanding of the security threats and challenges Europe is facing in the security field;
- ▶ a common institutional framework capable of defining both strategic and operational concepts;
- ▶ a common industrial base to build up the relevant military capabilities.

European Defence has the potential to boost the security credentials of the EU while enhancing rather than weakening NATO.

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