

Set up a common defence system!

Summary

In a challenging geopolitical environment, the EU's cooperation on external security and defence should be strengthened. Future EU defence policy should aim at protecting the EU and its citizens by building a common defence system that deals effectively with external threats. Pooling our financial, human and intelligence resources will be more efficient and make our lives safer.

*What would we do first? **Set up a European Army!***

Full proposal

What's going on?

EU security policy is facing newly emerging threats such as hybrid warfare. At the same time, the EU still struggles to find sustainable answers to traditional security challenges posed by political instability in neighbouring countries, such as Libya or armed conflict caused by Russia's muscle flexing in Ukraine.

In the meanwhile, member states are losing their ability to respond effectively due to the fact that most of the member states' security and defence infrastructures, military capabilities and equipments are outdated. Europeans get less for what they pay for, because defence spending is fractured amongst member states. 17 different combat tanks, 28 different howitzers, 20 different fighter planes and a high number of various

frigates and destroyers are only some examples for inefficiencies.¹ It has been estimated that Europe could save 30% of its defence investment through pooling of procurement.² Beyond procurement, parallel structures of civil and military commands are a further source of inefficiency: there are 28 defence ministers, each with their own ministry and military command structures.

What's our vision?

The security of Europeans is more important than the prestige and power of national political and economic elites. Our vision for European security & defence has three building blocks: **(1) Independent military and non-military capabilities.** This means having fully integrated defence forces - a European army - that ensures that Europe can take care of conventional & non-conventional threats to its territory. This also means having expeditionary forces that can, if necessary, act autonomously of other actors and as part of a comprehensive security approach that includes civilian instruments of conflict resolution (e.g. humanitarian operations, disarmament, state-building). While command structures will be unified, Integrated European military forces can be located decentrally throughout the continent and European citizens can enlist irrespective of their country of origin. **(2) Democratic decision-making.** European capabilities need to be accompanied by European decision-making. Matters of European security & defence shall be decided on the European level as part of the democratic, parliamentary process: no backdoor deals between national governments when it comes to the security of European citizens. **(3) A new security paradigm.** We want a system that limits the scope of security policy: a system that questions when someone with power tries to define something as a security issue. Labelling something as a 'threat to our security' is not an innocent move: it can create fear and intimidation among citizens, it

¹ European Commission, Reflection paper on the future of European defence, available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-paper-defence_en.pdf

² MSC, More European, more connected, and more capable, available at <https://www.securityconference.de/en/news/article/more-european-more-connected-and-more-capable-msc-presents-new-report-on-european-defense-coope/>

usually comes with demands to deal with it as a matter of priority, often outside the normal democratic process, and usually involving significant resources. We need a system of checks and balances to limit the scope of security policy in European society.

How do we get there?

1. **Establish a European army:** We want to move from existing multilateral cooperation to integration of defence forces that will make European security & defence (1) more effective, by adding a credible military component to the EU's comprehensive security approach, and (2) more efficient, by removing duplication. Member states willing to move ahead should use permanent structured cooperation, as set out in the Lisbon Treaty, with other member states able to join at a later point.³ Ultimately, there will be permanent forces under a unified EU military command with permanent military headquarters. The EU military command will be under the civilian control of a European defence minister who presides over a European Defence Ministry - hereby replacing the current 28 minister roles and ministries. A Cyber Security department within the ministry will pool Europe's external cyber security efforts.
2. **Transform parliamentary oversight:** Volt wants to achieve full parliamentary oversight by requiring a qualified majority in the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers for any deployment of military forces. A fully-fledged Committee on Security and Defence should be created in Parliament - building on the existing sub-committee.
3. **A European Security & Defence Academy:** Volt wants to train and educate high-ranking EU military personnel as well as civil servants on a wide range of security issues, based on the latest research and taught by the world's most

³ European Parliament, Implementation of the Lisbon Treaty provisions on the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) 2016, available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/573285/EPRS_BRI%282016%29573285_EN.pdf

eminent experts. Common training will support the development of a European esprit de corps and a common security understanding.

4. **Establish a European Intelligence Agency:** We want to move from a system of voluntary sharing of information to a binding system where the European level coordinates and directs lower-level intelligence activities.
5. **Transform the EDA into a Procurement Department:** The work of the European Defence Agency needs to be upgraded into a Procurement Department within the European defence ministry. This means moving from coordination of national procurement to central procurement by the EU.