

## EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL

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Admiral Willy Herteleer  
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Dear Mr. President, dear Admiral Herteleer,

Thank you for your letter and EURODEFENSE note on "Our Defence and Security at a Crossroads". High Representative Catherine Ashton has asked me to respond on her behalf.

I fully share your assessment that now is the time and the need, in the context of a growing demand for the European Union to become a more capable, coherent and strategic global actor, and against the backdrop of current financial constraints, to maximize synergies and strengthen cooperation.

EU defence ministers, at their six-monthly meeting within the Foreign Affairs Council on 30th November 2011, discussed these issues with their foreign affairs colleagues in detail. A challenging work program was adopted that aims at doing better with less. EU will further strengthen its Common Security and Defence Policy by developing civilian and military capabilities and forging synergies between them, by strengthening the ties between the internal and external dimensions of security and by promoting the comprehensive approach towards crisis management.

At their meeting Ministers also took stock of very promising first results of EU work on pooling and sharing, which, in times of increasingly constrained defence budgets, has particular potential to preserve and enhance operational effectiveness, possibly allowing the reinvestment of some savings in defence. But we are just at the beginning. Pooling and sharing are Member States driven. They require a change of mindset and continuous political impetus. They require nations willing to take a lead and the continued commitment of EU Chiefs of Defence to establish or widen collaborative projects. The European Defence Agency (EDA) can - and will - facilitate Member States' efforts to proceed with the implementation of specific concrete projects.

You rightly address the linkage between defence spending and defence industries. The possible impact of budget cuts on key industrial and technological capacities in Europe needs careful examination, and the Foreign Affairs Council gave us the task to do so. The Council also encouraged further synergies between EDA and the European Commission, in particular in the field of Research and Technology and the money spent there.

While a lot of work is ongoing, we clearly need continued support and better public understanding. To this end I am particular grateful for your initiative that will help to focus the attention of the European citizens on the continued need to invest in defence and security.

Yours sincerely,



Maciej POPOWSKI