



Comments on the EU global strategy for the EU foreign and security policy

Ref. European Commission strategy paper dated June 2016

In June 2016 the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mrs. Federica Mogherini, presented the new Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security policy.

General comment

The Federation of European Defence Technology Associations (EDTA) welcomes this renewed vision on a common European Union foreign policy. However, the relevance of a strong defence, defence industry and advanced defence related technology is slightly undervalued in the document. Many aspects mentioned can be found in similar strategies and policies of the past years without a lot of actual and measurable results. This invokes the necessity of stronger and more effective policy lines. We understand however that the EU global strategy document will be followed soon by a white-book on defence, detailing the defence related strategy elements into more practical plans.

Important focus areas

Interesting in the strategy are the focus on defence cooperation as "the norm" (page 45), higher defence expenditures by the EU member states (page 44) and more hard power (page 4) to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Just as important are the confirmed intention for defence related R&D funded by the commission (page 21) and the intention to deepen the relationship with NATO, particularly where it concerns coordinated defence capability development (page 37).

Participation of industry

The policy to establish and maintain a sustainable, innovative and competitive European defence industry (page 45) is unchanged although it has had little effect on a European level in the past decades. More focus should be given to positive stimuli to the defence related industry. Examples of such stimuli are access to the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and similar EU wide instruments, now excluded for defence related investments. Also benefits for industry when participating in cooperative capability development and production projects could be an effective incentive. Industry will only move into a politically desired direction when it leads to more activity and profit.

International cooperation

New and important in the strategy document is the requirement imposed on Member States to spend a minimum of 20% of their defence budgets on "procurement and R&D" (page 45) and a benchmark to spend 35% of the resulting investments through collaborative procurement (page 46). In our view these intentions are deemed to fail if EDA is only tasked to assess the benchmarks regularly (page 46) and does not have a mechanism to enforce this policy Europe wide. In this respect it could be more effective to develop incentives for member States instead of repressive means. A VAT exemption for cooperative projects and an option to compensate industry for costs incurred by cooperation could help.

Technology

The technology focus of the EU global strategy is given to (1) "monitoring of flows", (2) "trusted digital capabilities and cyber defence", (3) "protection of critical infrastructure" and (4) "a full spectrum of land, air, space and maritime capabilities, including strategic enablers" (page 45).

The first three focus areas do not seem to address the capability shortfalls (page 46) and lead to a stronger Europe (page 0) with advanced high tech and capable armed forces. Strong forces may



however be needed to counter the security challenges Europe will face in the 21th century as a global responsible stakeholder (page 8, 18).

Monitoring of flows of refugees and terrorists is important, just as cyber defence is. The EDTA however believes that for European security more emphasis should be given to the fourth area of capabilities mentioned. These are defined too general in nature in the strategy document and their importance is undervalued. All sorts of new technology will be needed if Europeans "... must be better equipped, trained and organized to contribute decisively to collective efforts as well as to act autonomously" (page 19). The list of technology needed is long: advanced sensors; artificial intelligence; command & control; low probability of intercept communication; remotely piloted systems (air, land, sea and underwater); advanced materials; biotechnology; kinetic interceptors, advanced training facilities and much more.

Conclusion

Practical policies and instruments are needed to resolve the three main elements of comment:

- (1) positive stimuli for industry in the defence sector,
- (2) incentives for Governments to implement cooperative projects, and
- (3) more emphasis on technologies needed for hard power.

Resulting policies and instruments could and should be implemented in the white-book on Defence and other European policy papers to fulfil the requirements of the EU global strategy.

About EDTA

The Federation of European Defence Technology Associations (EDTA) was established in 1992 as "EDA" on the initiative of the Defence Ministers of the European NATO nations assembled in the Independent European Planning Group (IEPG). The Federation aims to enhance cooperation and professional relationships among its members. It does so by information exchange, promotion of conferences and promotion of public interest in defence industry and technology.

The federation has 11 member associations of engineers in 10 European nations with a total of over 6000 individual and 400 corporate members. For more information visit www.fedta.eu.