Towards a European Defence in 2030

Abstract:

Current challenges to global stability call for more cooperation and coordination between like-minded partners. Renew Europe supports a strong EU becoming a significant security provider in the framework of an alliance of democracies defending themselves against malign behaviours originating from authoritarian states and other malign actors. In contract, Europe is often too slow, insufficiently agile, it struggles to react in time and is not yet up to the challenge. Time has now come for increased coherence, and political willingness at both national and European level. This Renew Position Paper outlines the main elements of a real European defense union. All the capabilities resulted from this roadmap must serve strategic long-term goals of protecting Europe and strengthening the rules-based liberal world order.

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About Renew Europe Group

The Renew Europe Group is a coalition of progressives, liberals, democrats and reformists, that make up the largest centrist group in the history of the European Parliament. Brought to you from the European Liberal Forum, this new reference series aims to disseminate Renew Europe Group positions to the wider liberal family, policymakers and industry stakeholders, civil society and the general public. While, at the same time, the position papers will raise awareness on a number of issues and policy sectors, from sustainability and climate change, to democracy and the rule of law, human rights and fair competition.

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About ELF

The European Liberal Forum (ELF) is the official political foundation of the European Liberal Party, the ALDE Party. Together with 51 member organisations, we work all over Europe to bring new ideas into the political debate, to provide a platform for discussion, and to empower citizens to make their voices heard. Our work is guided by liberal ideals and a belief in the principle of freedom. We stand for a future-oriented Europe that offers opportunities for every citizen. ELF is engaged on all political levels, from the local to the European. We bring together a diverse network of national foundations, think tanks and other experts. In this role, our forum serves as a space for an open and informed exchange of views between a wide range of different EU stakeholders.

1. Introduction

The European Union faces serious challenges in its immediate neighbourhood but also at global level and these challenges are getting more and more serious…

- **Russia** has remained aggressive and present in our neighbourhood: in Ukraine, it continues its provocations, violates the ceasefire, with a recent dangerous escalation in the Donbass, against the background of political deadlock in a conflict that has claimed more than 13,000 lives. In Syria, Russia supports Bashar al-Assad's regime; in **Libya**, **CAR**, **Mozambique and in the Sahel**, it sends private military companies which take advantage of crisis situations and make them even worse, while going against European stabilisation efforts. In the Black Sea and, since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia is strengthening its military hold in the EU itself, cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns originating in Russia are examples of unfriendly behaviours accounting for interferences against our democracies and hybrid threats. Energy blackmail is yet another example of Russian interference and a way of trying to manipulate European politics through hybrid threats as we in see in Moldova or Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- In the field of disinformation and cyberattacks, **China has not been inactive**. A partner, a competitor and a systemic rival, China is engaged in a significant military build-up and challenges international law in Hong Kong and the China Sea. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted European dependency on China and widened the scope of European reflection on strategic autonomy.

- **Authoritarian powers** have become bolder: **Turkey** purchases Russian military equipment, challenges Greece and Cypriot rights in the East Med and is militarily involved in several regional conflicts… **Iran** is in breach of its commitments as regards uranium enrichment, and continues to play a destabilising role in the Middle East.

- **The instability in the EU's neighbourhood** is growing and threatens Europe's stability:

  - The Libyan crisis is not over yet and has consequences on its neighbours in Africa as well as Europe.

  - There is no end in sight for the Syrian tragedy, which imposes a heavy burden on countries in the region and still represents a risk to Europe security due to the remaining presence of terrorist groups.

- Russia's policy of occupation and annexation of parts of Georgia, Ukraine and its troops in Moldova (Transnistria), as well as the concentration of large military forces on Ukraine's Eastern border, remains a strategic factor of instability and tensions.

- The weakness of states and national armies in the Sahel prevents them from decisively defeating jihadist groups and fighting all sorts of trafficking, having a negative impact on Europe.

- The UK government implements a hard Brexit with no intention so far to engage in a cooperation on foreign, security and defence policy with the European Union, although threats and challenges are common.

- **The terrorist threat is far from over.** While the fear of a planned attack has diminished due to the territorial and military weakening of the Islamic State, the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan is as much a breeding ground and a symbolic victory for terrorism. The message that all jihadist-terrorist organisations read out is decisive: "resist because the West will withdraw and leave its allies at our mercy", which evidently strengthens our enemies and weakens our local allies. It is likely to generate competition between Al Qaeda, Daesh and other groups leading to a resurgence of the terrorist threat in Syria, Sahel and Afghanistan. Moreover, within our borders, the endogenous threat remains high.

- **Hybrid threats are on the rise**, as the recent example of the Belarusian regime conducting a hybrid warfare operation using migrant flows as a weapon shows us.

- **Terrorism and hybrid threats** blur the boundaries between territorial defence and the fight against external threats. Violence is escaping from states that have lost their monopoly on it. War has become both civil and military, public and private, internal and external, profoundly disrupting democracies, their values and institutions.

- The strategic stability based so far on mutual deterrence has been radically affected by the presence of hypersonic missiles, the militarisation of space and cyber attacks.

- **Climate change brings new security risks.** After more than two decades in which the High North was largely considered not to be a "traditional" major strategic concern, the question of whether the **Arctic** could be considered an area of military competition has resurfaced. Climate change poses new security risks with increased appetites for Arctic resources, as the region becomes more accessible to commercial shipping and extraction industries (including fossil fuels), mining and fishing.

- **Multilateralism is called into question**, and the UN and multilateral institutions are being marginalised in crisis management at a time when they are calling for joint responses. We are witnessing the return of power politics, unilateral actions and competition between powers at all levels (military, economic, technological). The architecture of international treaties and rules is eroding, particularly in the field of disarmament, while there is a lack of regulation and cooperation regarding new technologies. Moreover, **the risk of nuclear proliferation is higher** (Iran, obsolete bilateral treaties.

- New technologies such as AI, machine learning and quantum computing bring with them as many risks as opportunities. The technology competition in military affairs is likely to determine a new type of power struggle. Whoever gets ahead first and develops these technologies will also set the scene worldwide on how they are being used and according to which rules.

- **The transatlantic relationship is both essential and in a process of transformation.** The United States is the EU's best and closest ally. For a vast majority of EU Member States, which are members of NATO, the transatlantic alliance is, and will remain, the cornerstone of our continent's security. Yet, major transformations have occurred in the transatlantic relationship in recent years:

  - Confirming a trend that has been going on for several years, the United States is focused on its vital interest and pivoting its priorities towards the Asia Pacific. In addition, the US, for more than 5 years, has repeatedly asked Europe to take more responsibility for itself, and expects Europeans to increase their defence efforts. President Biden has expressed clear support for European defence initiatives.

  - NATO is at a moment of self-reflection and preparing a strategic review. Questions have been raised on tensions triggered by Turkey and on a deficit of consultations among allies during the American withdrawal from Afghanistan. We need a strong NATO and a strong EU, both supporting each other. The EU must strengthen the European pillar of NATO and ensure European voices are better heard in the Transatlantic Alliance. The creation of a strategic dialogue between the EU and the US is a positive step forward.

- Current challenges to global stability call for more cooperation and coordination between like-minded partners. Renew Europe supports a strong EU becoming a significant security provider in the framework of an alliance of democracies defending themselves against malign behaviours originating from authoritarian states and other malign actors.

- Finally, the Union's citizens have high expectations with regard to security and defence, with a collective awareness of the need for a Europe that protects its citizens and its interests. Consistent Eurobarometer polls have shown strong majorities for the EU to do more on defence.

In this perspective, time has come to demonstrate political will and leadership among Europeans towards a real European Defence Union while respecting Member States constitutional constraints.

I.

2. European Defence has made significant progress but time has come for a leap forward

Since 2016, we have come a long way in European defence. We have decided together on the necessary instruments for boosting European defence cooperation: Permanent Structured Cooperation (PSC), European Defence Fund (EDF), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), European Peace Facility (EPF), Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)… **Time has now come for increased coherence, and political willingness at both national and European level.**

Indeed, the EU still suffers from structural deficiencies that hamper its ability to act: insufficient common strategic culture, nascent shared threat analysis and intelligence sharing, weaknesses of autonomous action capability, including a permanent military planning capability, lack of an EU rapid reaction force, governance that makes decision-making slow and complex.

Despite numerous commitments at global level, the EU has not managed yet to be a significant security provider

CSDP MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS: TOO MANY, TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE?

In the domain of common missions and operations, the EU has seen some success stories (operation NAVFOR Atalanta, post-conflict stabilisation missions), but in a number of cases the EU's role can be summed up as too little, too late. While the EU has launched numerous CSDP missions and operations, they are often non-executive, with unambitious mandates, they suffer from slow force generation, and the issue of equipping our partners still needs to be urgently addressed through the European Peace Facility, which is just coming into operation.

We must anticipate future crises, including existing conflicts, which may intensify. We must also realize that, where we are insufficiently present, other states (increasingly authoritarian states) fill the gaps and may harm European interests and values. Indeed, our CSDP missions and operations are part of an environment saturated by the presence of other actors as it is the case with the development of hybrid warfare in Sahel, CAR, and Mozambique, where Russia uses "private armies" such as the Wagner Group, or with the presence of third countries in the Balkans, the Horn of Africa, the Eastern Partnership region, Syria, or Libya. Would we still be able, in 2021, to re-launch Operation Artemis (2003 in the Democratic

Republic of Congo), considered as the first EU-led military operation, the first autonomous EU operation, the first EU rapid reaction mission, the first operation outside Europe, the first operation applying the framework nation principle and the first example of a "bridging" operation, conducted in cooperation between the EU and the United Nations?

Even in a broader context, the European ability to act can be questioned. In this perspective, it is important to draw carefully the right lessons from our 20-year engagement in Afghanistan, where we deployed a CSDP mission, EUPOL Afghanistan (2007-2016). Many are wondering whether – after Afghanistan – Sahel will come next. Sahel and Afghanistan are facing some similar challenges, the terrorist threat in the first place, but also corruption and bad governance. In Sahel, lasting stability will not be achieved through a military victory alone but through the restoration of state authority. We need to address the needs and expectations of local societies shaken by terrorism and insecurity and invest in local civil society, education and deployment of non-military troops in this respect.

In this context, it is important that our military cooperation within the EU and with our closest allies in and within NATO remains flexible and agile. We also need to distinguish where our engagement remains necessary and makes a fundamental difference for Europe. Those lessons will be critical for the European security and defence agenda.

We should draw lessons from the Afghanistan crisis, all the more so as the worsening geopolitical situation, growing and changing security threats and strained public budgets make it more than ever necessary to make a qualitative political leap and to think about European defence. We should increase European involvement and relevance and call for better coordination not just among Member States but also with NATO, especially with the US. The problem should be addressed at the next NATO summit in 2022.

Joint EU capabilities place Europe in second place worldwide. However the EU is not the 2nd largest military power in the world.

The 2008 financial crisis had strained public budgets and led to drastic uncoordinated cuts in defence budgets of the Member States. In terms of investment, we must avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, whereas increased pressure on national budgets can be realistically expected in the medium term. We cannot afford to be a dwarf in a land of giants in 2030, because the threats will not have disappeared by then.

Even though certain Member States now re-assess and restructure their military capabilities and contemplate increases in defence spending, the risk of waste, duplications, inefficient spending and deepening the interoperability gap within 27 fragmented defence frameworks persists. These efforts must be aligned and coordinated. Together EU Member States spend as much as China and four times as much as Russia, yet their military output is limited.

We need to spend more strategically and cooperatively, to improve the effectiveness of our defence budgets and investments, and, improve drastically the European contribution to NATO and deliver transatlantic burden sharing in a more effective way than if they all respected their commitment to spend 2% of their GDP to their defence.

New European responses (EDF, PESCO, CARD, EPF) constitute building blocks but are far from sufficient.

Since 2016, European defence cooperation has been considerably reinforced and incentivised at EU level. Security and defence have become a fundamental priority, as reflected by the addition of an autonomous heading in the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework. The first grants from the European budget for industrial projects supporting European Strategic Autonomy have become a reality with the entry into force, in 2021, of the European Defence Fund.

Still, drawing lessons from the pandemic, we need to limit our dependences on supply, especially for critical infrastructure, by multiplying our supply routes and developing alternative technologies and solutions. In addition, our defence capabilities are still fragmented, and too often, they are not interoperable. Over the past decade, two manufacturers in the US and two in China have built 138 and 68 warships respectively. In comparison, over the same period, in Europe, 12 different players built 80 armed ships. **The fragility of European defence companies limits their output capacity and hampers the sustainability of a concrete European Strategic Autonomy** and of delivering in commitments undertaken in strategic partnerships.

The EU's new defence initiatives (from CARD, PSC to EDF) should help reduce the gap on critical enablers if consistently defined and implemented. In this regard, the Strategic Compass will bear a peculiar responsibility: offering concrete guidance for a unified list of capability development priorities and deeply reinforcing the consistency of the EU defence capability planning process.

The new challenge of hybrid threats and technological dependence

Authoritarian big powers and, increasingly, regional powers, take advantage of the succession of crises and the unstable context to impose themselves by developing **hybrid threats and attacks**. State or non-state actors seek to create and take advantage of an ambiguity to impose their will. To do so, they combine direct or indirect, often subversive, military and non-military means of action, cultivating ambiguity and exploiting the weaknesses of international law. Our European democracies are still ill-equipped to deal with these initiatives.

In parallel, the major changes brought about by technological developments, with the current digital revolution and the emergence of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, etc., constitute a geopolitical, security and defence issue. Our technological sovereignty will be key to ensuring the security of the European Union and its citizens.

We must avoid complete dependence on non-European sources for strategic technologies. European strategic autonomy shall be about the strategic management of our dependence vis-à-vis third countries and the development of a sustainable European supply for technologies that are essential to Europe's ability to act and prosperity.

But above all, Europe is too slow, insufficiently agile, it struggles to react in time and is not yet up to the challenge.

3. From words to action: let's build a European defence Union

As Ursula von der Leyen rightly pointed in her last SOTEU speech: *"You can have the most advanced forces in the world – but if you are never prepared to use them – of what use are they? What has held us back until now is not just a shortfall of capacity – it is the lack of political will. And if we develop this political will, there is a lot that we can do at EU level"*. **Political will is urgently needed to enable the EU to act autonomously when it is needed.**

The time for political will is now

THE STRATEGIC COMPASS CANNOT BE A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

The need for more EU defence has never been so obvious, to allow the EU to act autonomously when and where necessary – and to become a more capable ally, including for the US. The Council must seize the opportunity of the Strategic Compass to define core EU strategic interests and decide on ambitious and tangible progress.

What is at stake is the Union's capacity to act as a credible security provider and strategic partner. We need to become collectively more responsive, more effective and more autonomous outside our borders through our CSDP missions and operations.

However, it shall be clear that the Strategic Compass step (roadmap) should be regularly updated to reflect new challenges and new geopolitical realities and should set an ambitious and operational course, with a timetable for the implementation of decisions and follow-up mechanisms. It should enable the Union to build a coherent defence policy and a common strategic culture, a capacity to anticipate threats and react rapidly and in a coordinated fashion, an autonomous resilience capacity, the ability to mobilize resources in a spirit of solidarity when a Member State is threatened and requests assistance, and ultimately to contribute to the protection of European citizens.

The Strategic Compass should contain a monitoring mechanism to assess on a regular basis the progress realised by the EU and its Member States in achieving these ambitions and fulfilling their commitments. The European Parliament should have its say.

Taking a step forward in Intelligence sharing

Renew believes it is now necessary to take a step forward in terms of intelligence sharing and pooling the development of a genuine intelligence capability at European level. Europeans have information and intelligence, but information is fragmented, and knowledge is scattered. Yet in an emergency or threat situation, rapid collective decision-making is needed, and Member States need to be better prepared and fully informed. It is therefore vital to improve cooperation on intelligence and situational awareness by bringing together, for example in a common centre such as a reinforced EU INTCEN, the knowledge of all services and all available sources.

A FASTER AND BETTER DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

Europe is moving too slowly in the field of defence. In the short term, in order to make decision-making more flexible and responsive, Renew advocates majority/abstention decision-making, while using all the possibilities given by the Treaties. The use of constructive abstention (as was the case for the EPF) and the more regular use of coalitions of the willing, either under article 44 TEU or through new procedures, could provide the flexibility required both by the necessity to act quickly and the existence of different levels of readiness and/or strategic cultures among Member States.

The Parliament should be fully informed and consulted on the implementation of the CSP to ensure its proper articulation with the various financial instruments of the CSDP. In particular, the EDF, over which the European Parliament exercises control, or the Global Europe instrument, in particular its Peace and Security dimension.

Renew Europe pleads for the creation of a fully-fledged Security and defence committee in the European Parliament. The current remit of the sub-committee is not precisely defined, and it has no budgetary or legislative powers of its own. Budgetary control and co-legislation are de facto scattered in committees (ITRE, IMCO, TRAN...) which can hardly take into account the very specific nature of defence and security.

However, more needs to be done. Renew Europe advocates that, the treaties must give the Parliament a greater role in matters of security and defence of the EU, as the only directly elected representatives of European citizens. The flexibility of Article 44 is limited if it is to retain the unanimity rule. These issues should not remain taboo and should be debated and, if necessary, amended in the Treaties.

BUILDING A BETTER SENSE OF SOLIDARITY AMONG MEMBER STATES IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY AND DEFENCE

In a context where threats are multiplying and becoming more complex, it needs to be clear to everyone in Europe and outside Europe that a threat and/or an attack

against an EU Member State is a threat against the Union itself. This principle also applies to cyber and space and to non-military threats.

With a wide – if not exhaustive – array of competences, the European Union is certainly the most relevant forum to address threats that exceed the mere military dimension and combine military and non-military means. The Union must be able to come to the aid of one of its Member States if it is threatened, even in the case other allies and partners would decide not to intervene. It is our common responsibility, and it is at the very core of our European project. European defence forces (and, on a longer term, capabilities) should be able to assist the defence of EU Member States in order to restore security throughout the European Union, while respecting the specific status of their security and defence policy.. This is why Renew believes that there is an urgent need to reflect on what concretely the mutual defence clause (Article 42(7) TEU) and the solidarity clauses (Article 222 TFEU) can deliver, in the event of an attack on EU territory. This reflection is particularly relevant in the field of hybrid threats.

Rethinking European defence strategies is especially needed in the context of hybrid threats. While individual incidents often do not trigger a response, the accumulative effect of these threats demand for clear and deterrent action. Practice shows that it is in fact inaction of the EU that has lead to escalation. The EU should therefore allow a victim State a call for assistance of an EU Member State, and eventually an international ally, under the right to collective self-defence. This would require a reinterpretation of the European solidarity clauses based on international law, as well as a flexible framework for hybrid attacks and corresponding countermeasures, and an assessment of the Commission into the need for an international agreement with non-EU partners.

We must put our means where our mouth is

If the EU had to conduct a similar operation to the Kabul evacuation, we should be in capacity to take decisions faster, be ready to deploy our missions more rapidly, to improve the force generation for our missions and operations, to be more flexible, and finally to be open to support European ad hoc coalitions:

MORE EFFECTIVE AND MORE FLEXIBLE DEPLOYMENT OF CSDP MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS

The EU needs to strengthen its means to achieve faster, more effective and more flexible deployment of CSDP missions and operations. It is essential that Member States put the necessary operational means into CSDP missions and operations, reflecting the commitment made when they are decided jointly.

A RAPID REACTION FORCE

Renew Europe supports the proposal to initiate a rapid reaction force that could be a nucleus from which European Integrated Military Forces should grow in a long-term perspective.

In concrete terms, based on a pragmatic scenario, this rapid action force would be made up of approximately 5,000 personnel (as a first step) who could be deployed in the initial phase of a crisis or to organise an emergency evacuation. This rapid action force must be able to mobilise quickly, with a single command in Brussels. Obviously, as a starting point, this pool of forces from different EU Member States should train and exercise together. **The EU battlegroups could constitute a nucleus** for such a force, taking into account and addressing the current limitations they face, notably the questions of the unanimity rule, of the nature of the needs, which do not necessarily correspond to the competences of the country on call, of national caveats and political monitoring. The question of financing the cost of an intervention, which currently rests on the shoulders of the country on call, must be addressed. However, Member States will always remain the sole authority to send troops of their nationality on a mission, taking into consideration their specific constitutional constraints.

As too much precious time has already been lost, in case not all of the 27 Member States are ready to participate, another option is for PSC (Art. 42(6) and Art 46 TEU), as envisaged in the Treaty, to be used to provide the basis for advancing with a core group of Member States. The PSC would be open to all Member States and function within the EU institutional system.

The EU should also make use of **Article 44(1) TEU**, which allows the Union to respond rapidly and effectively to crises, including by allowing **an ex-post mandate to be given to an ad-hoc operation** led by a group of Member States.

A SINGLE HQ WITH A SINGLE COMMAND

But first and foremost, among the first steps to be swiftly taken, a permanent EU operational Headquarters, with a single command, must be finally established in Brussels and closely linked to the operation of crisis management structures within the EEAS. That "command and control" will allow the exercise of authority and direction by a single commanding officer over a European budget assigned resources. In all cases, the rapid reaction force would rely on a lead-nation, within **an EU appropriate Command and Control structure**.

Renew also advocate for the formalisation of a specific Security and Defence configuration within the Council of the EU.

A strong Europe equals strong partnerships

A STRONG EUROPE MAKES A STRONGER NATO

For Renew Europe, **a strong Europe makes a stronger NATO**: the more EU member states invest and cooperate on defence, the stronger and more reliable they become for NATO. However, under certain circumstances (in space notably), developing EU-owned assets may be the only way for Member States to sovereignly access capabilities. In these cases, the EU appears as a power multiplier. European strategic autonomy is the ability to act autonomously when necessary and with our partners whenever possible.

In particular, **the Union must strengthen its partnership with NATO, and, thus, reinforce the European pillar in NATO**, while preserving the interests of its Member States that are not NATO members. The multiple and evolving security challenges that our Member States and allies face from the East and the South make our continued cooperation essential, including in responding to hybrid and cyber threats, in operations, and by helping our common partners. The EU and NATO must deepen their partnership further, to focus on implementation and interoperability in particular in hybrid threats, attacks, and the challenge they pose, military mobility; cyber cooperation, counter-terrorism, and strengthening resilience to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear-related risks.

In some cases or geographical areas, the EU may reinforce NATO action (for instance on military mobility), and in some others, notably when it does not intend to get involved, it can complement it (Gulf of Guinea,). When it comes to new hybrid threats, the EU can mobilise competences which are non-military. NATO and the EU could coordinate in that case.

We must also revitalise our partnership with other strategic partners, in particular the United Kingdom. The EU and the UK share many threats, values and interests. Renew supports a strong new partnership between the EU and the UK on security and defence. When our own vital interests are at stake, realism must prevail over ideology and there is no time to lose. Such a partnership should however preserve the institutional autonomy of each partner. Renew Europe is therefore in favour of **relaunching the negotiation of a security and defence agreement with the UK**.

There is a strong strategic interest for the EU to **invest with partners in our immediate neighbourhood**, at our eastern border and southern borders, and to work together on preventing and addressing hybrid threats, on coordinating and sharing good practices in cyber defence, in fighting against terrorism, disinformation, propaganda and third-party interference in democratic processes, increasing societal resilience and sharing information. Neighbouring countries, especially the three associated Eastern Partners (Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), repeatedly express their interest in enhanced security and defense cooperation with the EU, and continue proving seriousness of their intent by undertaking EU supported security sector reforms and contributing to the CSDP missions. For the

sake of stronger Europe, it is important to expand cooperation with such trusted neighbors and to involve them into more frequent consultations, planning for CSDP missions at the earlier stage, and PESCO once the issue of participation of third countries is resolved.

Furthermore, the EU must not shy away from behaving like a genuine global player. The importance of the Indo-Pacific cannot be underestimated. France has territories there and the EU is already present through Operation Atalanta and must enhance its focus on an area where its interests are at stake.

There is no security or global EU strategic leverage without a genuine integrated approach

Military presence and action in a crisis may be necessary. It will never be enough to fight the root causes of violence. The EU has to learn to work in a continuum between security, governance, development and fight against climate change. The key word is coordination: Renew believes that there is a need to **make the best use of the European Peace Facility**, that must meet the needs of the States it supports by being well coordinated with the European development instruments brought together in Global Europe in order to, finally, put in place an **integrated approach on governance-security-development-climate change**.

PSC and EDF: the EU needs the right capabilities and technologies

The EU cannot continue to depend on external providers for its capabilities and key technologies: this requires doing more to fill the gaps on critical enablers such as airlift transport, helicopters, Intelligence-Surveillance-Reconnaissance (in particular satellites and drones), and mobile medical units.

Renew Europe believes that it is **now time to accelerate and that we should develop, building notably on the EDF, an efficient European Defence Technological Industrial Base,** defragmented and at the service of our needs and ambitions, while accessible to our SMEs.

PESCO and the EDF must result in projects that work and provide real European added value (i.e., initially what the Member States cannot do alone), with a limited number of projects on capabilities that are structuring for the Union and focused on operational effectiveness and interoperability.

Regarding PESCO, there is a need to review governance for better parliamentary oversight and for the selection of projects that fill gaps by ensuring that MS deliver on their commitments. In addition, operational aspect of permanent structured cooperation must be developed in at least the same proportions as the capability aspect.

As for the EDF, Renew stresses the importance of increasing coherence between European capability prioritisation initiatives and the various national planning processes. Member States, in different frameworks, must maintain a sustained pace of defence investment and use the opportunities of the European Defence Fund to stimulate new investment;

The development of **military mobility**, together with NATO, is equally important to ensure the territorial integrity of the European Union and the efficient deployment of capabilities. This applies to our northern, eastern and southern flanks.

Renew considers that the EU must also invest in key dual-use areas: cyber, disruptive technologies, the use of artificial intelligence with a view to operationalizing strategic autonomy (autonomy of analysis, decision and action). Building on synergies with the European Defence Fund investments, Renew believes that other investment funds (Horizon Europe, the EU Space programme, etc.) shall be used to fund dual-use research, enabling the EDF to focus on specifically military R&D. We must make it easier for companies, especially SMEs, to navigate the maze of various European funds (EDF, space programme, digital programme, internal security fund, etc.) and benefit from them in order to carry out multi-purpose projects.

The abolition of the VAT rate for defence equipment designed and developed within the EU is a positive measure aimed at levelling the global playing field and promoting European Strategic Autonomy and it should be complemented by measures to stimulate a defence industry across Member States.

Given the probable increasing pressure on Member States' budgets in the coming months and years, it is imperative to foresee, from now on, the means to ring-fence current and future cooperative projects with a European value added from budgetary cuts. An exclusion of these projects from the **calculation of the structural deficit within the Economic and Monetary Union framework** would disincentive Member States to do so.

Reinforcing our resilience

A GLOBAL AND CROSS CUTTING APPROACH

The COVID 19 pandemic has exposed our vulnerabilities and the need to pool our capabilities, to implement them more effectively and in a more coordinated

manner. We need to develop a global and crosscutting approach to security and defence issues at a time when competition between powers is extending to almost all fields: military, diplomatic, economic and technological. It is also necessary to guarantee the EU's freedom of access to contested strategic areas.

We are living in a key moment, where new destabilising technologies, leading to an increase in risks and threats, can challenge the very existence of one or more Member States and the preservation of their vital interests.

A REINFORCED CYBER SECURITY CAPABILITY AND COMMON STANDARDS

At a time when our continent, our Member States and our institutions themselves are subject to unfriendly actions, information manipulation, cyberattacks and even individual sanctions, for instance from Russia or China, there is an urgent need to strengthen our cyber security capabilities to fight against foreign interference in our democracies and national and European institutions. The 'all connected' is a reinforced threat. We cannot just deal with cyber threats; we must have the ambition to have a Union at the forefront of cyber security. The EU must develop its own cyber defence tools in Europe, put in place a real "European cyber defence" with common standards in a new European cyber resilience law.

A NEW HYBRID TOOLBOX

The full spectrum of EU instruments for countering hybrid operations must be mobilised in a coherent and effective manner, including CSDP operations in line with the "Petersberg tasks" defined in Article 43 of the TEU (using civilian and military means for inter alia joint disarmament operations, evacuation, humanitarian and rescue tasks, conflict prevention and peace keeping, combat in crisis management, peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation, as well as for the fight against terrorism).

Moreover, Renew Europe believes that all EU institutions and member states should modernise responses against new threats and be able to respond quickly and effectively to new threats, with the creation of a new hybrid toolbox, in which countermeasures could be possible through a contemporary interpretation and implementation of the international legal framework.

DEFENDING FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Freedom of navigation at sea is being more and more challenged in new areas of interest, notably in the Indo-Pacific, where the definition of European Strategy towards Indo-Pacific have become necessary, including the development of the concept of a coordinated maritime presence. Our presence in the Gulf of Guinea and Strait of Hormuz should be maintained and strengthened. The Artic regions where Russia invests at military level, and where climate change progresses, shall be another area of concerns for Europeans. The EU's conventional maritime and

land security strategy should therefore be updated in the face of a China which, as a great power, seeks by all means to defend its economic and military power. The EU maritime security strategy should therefore be updated.

Europe's security is not regional but rather global. The Indo-Pacific region is therefore an area of great strategic interest, all the more so because of the presence in the area of sovereign territories of a Member State, France.[NART]

Furthermore, the EU must not shy away from behaving like a genuine global player. The importance of the Indo-Pacific cannot be underestimated. The EU is already present through Operation Atalanta and must enhance its focus on an area where its interests are at stake.

Freedom of movement in the air is also at risk, as shown by the hijacking of an airliner flying to Lithuania via Belarus, in May 2021, and the arrest of a young Belarusian opponent on board. This was also highlighted by the violation of Danish airspace by two Russian aircraft in June 2021 and constant violation of the Baltic states' airspace, including most recent incident by Russian military aircraft violating Estonian and Lithuanian airspace, also, in June 2021.

Strengthening innovation and technological sovereignty

The EU must invest in "strategically important critical technologies and innovations" for Europe with the aim of strengthening European resilience for strategic value chains and critical technologies. A key example is cloud computing, which provides services for storing personal data remotely. At present, the EU is lagging behind in this area. 92% of data produced in the West is stored in the US, compared to 4% in Europe. The EU must invest in the development of industrial clouds, at a time when companies are seeking solutions to manage and secure an exponential flow of industrial data. Renew expects the Commission to make ambitious proposals in this direction. In addition, the EDF must enable strong innovation in the emerging and disruptive technologies. And the European Defence Agency could be transformed into a European Defence Innovation Agency, networking national innovation agencies.

Establish a European space defence policy

Space has become a place of geostrategic confrontation. Investing in it is the only way for Europe to ensure that outer space remains non-militarised. Renew believes

that, in view of the rising strategic stakes, the EU must adopt a European space defence strategy. The main objectives of which must be to counter the attempts of militarising space in line with international obligations, preserve an autonomous access to space for the EU and its Member States, to foster the emergence of a common European strategic culture on space defence, and to reduce strategic dependencies and improve the operational governance of European space programs. We must improve our ability to increase our security in space and from space.

4. Conclusion

The EU and Europeans must (re)learn the language and grammar of power if Europe wants to assume its responsibilities on the international scene and stop opposing cooperation and power. We must be able to defend our democracies and values, and contribute to the protection of democracies facing authoritarian regimes. We, Europeans, must become leading security providers and no longer security consumers.

All the capabilities resulted from this roadmap must serve strategic long-term goals. The world stage could benefit from a revival of liberalism and a strengthening of the rules-based world order. We should fight back stronger against dictatorial actors and their threats, support the spread of democracy worldwide, and consolidate trust with like-minded partners, ensuring that the future world, yet to be shaped by the digital transformation, remains anchored in our values.

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