



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2016)0435

European Defence Union

European Parliament resolution of 22 November 2016 on the European Defence Union (2016/2052(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty of Lisbon,
- having regard to Title V of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to Article 42(6) TEU on permanent structured cooperation,
- having regard to Article 42(7) TEU on the defence alliance,
- having regard to Protocol No 1 on the role of national parliaments in the European Union,
- having regard to Protocol No 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 18 December 2013 and 25-26 June 2015,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 25 November 2013 and 18 November 2014 on the common security and defence policy,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 April 2016 on the EU in a changing global environment – a more connected, contested and complex world¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2012 on the EU's mutual defence and solidarity clauses: political and operational dimensions²,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 January 2009 on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union 2004-2008³, which stipulates in its paragraph 89 that 'fundamental rights do not stop at barrack gates' and that 'they also fully apply to citizens in uniform'

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0120.

² OJ C 419, 16.12.2015, p. 138.

³ OJ C 46 E, 24.2.2010, p. 48.

and recommends that ‘the Member States ensure that fundamental rights are also observed in the armed forces’,

- having regard to the final conclusions of the interparliamentary conferences on the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and the common security and defence policy (CSDP) of the Hague of 8 April 2016, of Luxembourg of 6 September 2015, of Riga of 6 March 2015, of Rome of 7 November 2014, of Athens of 4 April 2014, of Vilnius of 6 September 2013, of Dublin of 25 March 2013 and of Paphos of 10 September 2012,
- having regard to the recent statement made by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) at the ‘Gymnich meeting’ of EU foreign ministers of 2 September 2016, which again referred to the ‘window of opportunity’ for solid progress to be made among Member States in the field of defence,
- having regard to the document entitled ‘Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy’ presented by the VP/HR on 28 June 2016,
- having regard to the progress report of 7 July 2014 by the VP/HR and the Head of the European Defence Agency on the implementation of the European Council conclusions of December 2013,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 July 2013 entitled ‘Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector’ (COM(2013)0542),
- having regard to the Commission report of 24 June 2014 entitled ‘A new Deal for European Defence’,
- having regard to the Commission’s report of 8 May 2015 on the implementation of its communication on defence,
- having regard to the evaluations of Directive 2009/81/EC of 13 July 2009 on the coordination of procedures for the award of certain works contracts, supply contracts and service contracts by contracting authorities or entities in the fields of defence and security and of Directive 2009/43/EC on intra-EU transfers of defence-related products,
- having regard to the joint declaration of 8 July 2016 by the presidents of the European Council and the Commission and the Secretary-General of NATO,
- having regard to the joint communication of 11 December 2013 by the VP/HR and the Commission entitled ‘The EU’s comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises’ (JOIN(2013)0030), and to the related Council conclusions of 12 May 2014,
- having regard to the statement by the Italian Defence and Foreign Ministers of 10 August 2016 calling for a ‘Defence Schengen’,
- having regard to the joint statement by the German and French Foreign Ministers of 28 June 2016 on ‘A strong Europe in an uncertain world’,
- having regard to the potential secession of the UK from the EU,

- having regard to the results of Eurobarometer 85.1 of June 2016,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection and the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (A8-0316/2016),
- A. whereas in recent years the security situation in and around Europe has significantly worsened and has created arduous and unprecedented challenges that no single country or organisation is able to face alone; whereas Europe is experiencing the threat of terrorism in its territory more than ever, while terrorism and the scourge of constant violence in North Africa and the Middle East continue to expand; whereas solidarity and resilience require the EU to stand and to act together and systematically, and to do so in concert with our allies and partners and third countries; whereas prevention, the sharing of sensitive security information, ending armed conflict, overcoming widespread human rights abuses, the spread of democracy and the rule of law and the fight against terrorism are priorities for the EU and its citizens and should be the subject of engagement within as well as outside the EU's borders, including through an corps of military engineers created to address some very practical challenges related to climate change effects and natural disasters in third countries; whereas Europe should be stronger and quicker in real threat situations;
- B. whereas terrorism, hybrid threats, economic volatility, cyber and energy insecurity, organised crime and climate change constitute the main security threats of an everyday more complex and interconnected world in which the EU should do its best and search for the means to guarantee security and deliver prosperity and democracy; whereas the current financial and security context requires European armed forces to collaborate closer and military personnel to train and work more and better together; whereas according to Eurobarometer 85.1 in June 2016, approximately two thirds of EU citizens would like to see greater EU engagement in matters of security and defence policy; whereas internal and external security are becoming increasingly blurred; whereas special attention should be paid to preventing conflict, addressing the root causes of instability and ensuring human security; whereas climate change is a major threat to global security, peace and stability that amplifies threats to traditional security, inter alia by diminishing access to fresh water and foodstuffs for populations in fragile and developing countries and thus leading to economic and social tensions, forcing people to migrate, or creating political tensions and security risks;
- C. whereas the VP/HR has included the security of the Union as one of the top five priorities in her 'Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy';
- D. whereas the Treaty of Lisbon requires the Member States to make available appropriate capacities for civilian and military CSDP missions and operations; whereas the security and defence-building capacity enshrined in the Treaties is far from optimal; whereas the European institutions may also have a very significant role to play in launching political initiatives; whereas Member States have so far shown a lack of will to build a European Security and Defence Union, fearing that it would become a threat to their national sovereignty;
- E. whereas the cost of non-Europe in defence and security is estimated at EUR 26,4 billion

annually¹, as the result of duplication, overcapacity and barriers to defence procurement;

- F. whereas Article 42 TEU requires the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy as part of the CSDP, which will lead to an EU common defence when the European Council so decides voting unanimously; whereas Article 42(2) TEU also recommends to the Member States the adoption of such a decision in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements;
- G. whereas Article 42 TEU also provides for the creation of defence institutions, as well as for the definition of a European capabilities and armaments policy; whereas that article also requires that the EU's efforts should be NATO-compatible, complementary and mutually reinforcing; whereas a common Union defence policy should reinforce Europe's capacity to promote security within and beyond its borders, as well as strengthening the partnership with NATO and transatlantic relations, and will therefore enable a stronger NATO, consequently further promoting a more effective territorial, regional and global security and defence; whereas the recent joint declaration by the NATO Warsaw summit of 2016 on the NATO-EU strategic partnership recognised the role of NATO and the support the EU can give in achieving common goals; whereas a European Defence Union (EDU) should ensure the maintenance of peace, conflict prevention and a strengthening of international security, in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter;
- H. whereas the EU battlegroups, which reached full operational capability in 2007 and are designed to be used for military tasks of a humanitarian, peacekeeping and peacemaking nature, have not yet been used, despite the opportunity and need arising, owing to procedural, financial and political obstacles; highlights that this represents a missed opportunity in terms of strengthening the EU's role as an important global player for stability and peace;
- I. whereas except for the creation of the European Defence Agency (EDA), none of the other missing elements of the EU common security and defence policy have so far been conceived, decided or implemented; whereas the EDA still needs an overhaul of its organisation to allow it to develop its full potential and prove that it generates added value, makes the CSDP more effective and can lead to harmonised national defence planning processes in those fields which are relevant for CSDP military operations in line with the Petersberg tasks as described in Article 43 TEU; encourages all Member States to participate in and commit to the EDA in order to realise this goal;
- J. whereas the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy requires that the EU systematically encourage defence cooperation over the full spectrum of capabilities, in order to respond to external crises, help build our partners' capacities, guarantee Europe's safety, and create a solid European defence industry as being critical for the Union's strategic autonomy of decision and action; whereas any measures must be agreed upon by all members of the Council before implementation;
- K. whereas the European Council of June 2015, which partially focused on defence, called for fostering greater and more systematic European defence cooperation with a view to delivering key capabilities, including through the use of EU funds where appropriate, noting that military capabilities remain owned and operated by the Member States;

¹ 'The Cost of Non-Europe in Common Security and Defence Policy', European Parliament Research Service (2013), p. 78.

- L. whereas France invoked Article 42(7) TEU on 17 November 2015 and subsequently requested and managed the other Member States' aid and assistance contributions on a purely bilateral basis;
- M. whereas the EU-level White Book on security and defence should further strengthen the CSDP and enhance the EU's ability to act as a security provider in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty, and could represent a useful reflection on a future and more effective CSDP; whereas CSDP missions and operations are mostly located in regions such as the Horn of Africa and the Sahel which are heavily affected by negative consequences of climate change, such as drought and land degradation;
- N. whereas the Dutch Council Presidency promoted the idea of an EU White Book; whereas the Visegrád countries have welcomed the idea of a stronger European defence integration; and whereas Germany called for a European Security and Defence Union in White Paper of 2016 on 'German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr';
- O. whereas gradual defence integration is our best option for doing more with less money, and the White Book could offer a unique opportunity to propose additional steps;

European Defence Union

1. Recalls that to ensure its long-term security, Europe needs political will and determination underpinned by a broad set of relevant policy instruments, including strong and modern military capabilities; encourages the European Council to lead the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy and to provide additional financial resources to ensure its implementation, with a view to its establishment under the next multiannual political and financial framework of the EU (MFF); recalls that the creation of the common Union defence policy is a development and implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy under the Lisbon Treaty, which is bound by international law and is actually indispensable to enable the EU to promote the rule of law, peace and security globally; welcomes in this regard all ongoing activities of Member states aimed at further integrating our common defence efforts, also taking into account the very important contributions which the White Book on Security and Defence would make;
2. Urges the EU Member States to unleash the full potential of the Lisbon Treaty with regard to the CSDP in particular, with special reference to the permanent structured cooperation of Article 42(6) TEU or the start-up fund of Article 41(3) TEU; recalls that the Petersberg tasks of Article 43 TEU consist of a long list of ambitious military tasks such as joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking and post-conflict stabilisation; recalls that the same article also states that all these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories; stresses that the current state of the CSDP does not allow the EU to fulfil all the tasks listed; believes that the order of the day should be to systematically work on ways to allow the EU to fulfil the objectives of the Lisbon Treaty;
3. Is of the opinion that a truly strong EDU has to offer guarantees and capabilities to Member States beyond their individual ones;
4. Believes that the way to a EDU needs to start from a thoroughly revised CSDP, based on a

strong defence principle, efficient financing and coordination with NATO; considers that, as a necessary step, with the increasing integration of internal and external security, the CSDP needs to move beyond external crisis management so as to truly ensure the common security and defence and allow the Union's engagement at all stages of crises and conflicts, by using the full spectrum of instruments at its disposal;

5. Highlights the need for the establishment of a Council format of Defence Ministers to provide sustained political leadership and coordinate the framing of a European Defence Union; calls on the Council of the European Union to establish, as a first step, a permanent meeting format bringing together defence ministers of Member States which are committed to deeper defence cooperation as a forum for consultation and decision-making;
6. Calls on the President of the Commission to establish a standing 'defence matters' working group of members of the Commission, to be chaired by the VP/HR; calls for Parliament to be associated with permanent representatives in this group; supports further involvement of the Commission in defence, through well-focused research, planning and implementation; calls on the VP/HR to mainstream climate change into all EU external action and in particular into the CSDP;
7. Considers that the worsening perception of risks and threats in Europe make the establishment of the European Defence Union a matter of urgency, particularly given the increasing deterioration in the security environment at the EU's borders, especially in its eastern and southern neighbourhoods; notes that this is also reflected in the security strategies of the Member States; stresses that the situation deteriorated notably and progressively in 2014, with the birth and expansion of the self-declared Islamic State and subsequently the use of force by Russia;
8. Is of the opinion that the EDU needs to be based on a periodic joint security threat assessment of the Member States, but must also be flexible enough to satisfy Member States' individual security challenges and needs;
9. Takes the view that the Union should dedicate own means to fostering greater and more systematic European defence cooperation among its Member States, including permanent structured cooperation (PESCO); is convinced that the use of EU funds would be a clear expression of cohesion and solidarity, and that this would allow all Member States to improve their military capabilities in a more common effort;
10. Believes that a strengthened European defence cooperation would lead to greater effectiveness, unity, and efficiency, as well as boosting EU assets and capabilities and having positive potential effects on defence research and industrial matters; highlights that only through such deeper cooperation, which should gradually develop into a real EDU, will the EU and its Member States be able to acquire the technological and industrial capabilities needed to enable them to act more rapidly as well as autonomously and effectively, addressing today's threats in a responsive and efficient manner;
11. Encourages all Member States to make more binding commitments to one another by establishing permanent structured cooperation within the Union framework; encourages Member States to establish multinational forces within the PESCO framework, and make those forces available to the CSDP; underlines the importance and necessity of all Member States' implication in a permanent and efficient structured cooperation; believes

that the Council should normally entrust the implementation of the task of peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security to those multinational forces; suggests that both the policymaking processes at EU level and the national processes should be designed to allow a rapid crisis response; is convinced that the EU battlegroup system should be renamed and used and further developed to that end, politically, in modularity and with effective funding; encourages the set-up of an EU Operational Headquarters as a precondition for effective planning, command and control of common operations; underlines that PESCO is open to all Member States;

12. Calls on the Member States to particularly recognise the right of military personnel to form and join professional associations or trade unions and involve them in a regular social dialogue with the authorities; invites the European Council to take concrete steps towards the harmonisation and standardisation of the European armed forces, in order to facilitate the cooperation of armed forces personnel under the umbrella of a new European Defence Union;
13. Notes that all Member States have difficulties in maintaining a very broad range of defensive capabilities, mostly because of financial constraints; calls, therefore, for more coordination and clearer choices about which capabilities to maintain, so that Member States can specialise in certain capabilities;
14. Encourages Member States to look for further avenues for joint purchase, maintenance and upkeep of forces and material; suggests that it may be useful to look first at the pooling and sharing of non-lethal material, such as transport vehicles and aircraft, refuelling vehicles and aircraft, and other support material;
15. Believes that interoperability is key if Member States' forces are to be more compatible and integrated; stresses, therefore, that Member States must explore the possibility of joint procurement of defence resources; notes that the protectionist and closed nature of EU defence markets makes this more difficult;
16. Stresses that a revision and broadening of the Athena mechanism is needed to make sure that EU missions can be funded from collective funds instead of most of the costs falling to the individual participating Member States, thereby removing a potential hurdle for Member States to commit forces;
17. Calls on the European Parliament to establish a full-fledged Committee on Security and Defence to monitor the implementation of permanent structured cooperation;
18. Believes that a strong and increasing role for the EDA is indispensable for an efficient EDU in terms of coordinating capability-driven programmes and projects and establishing a common European capabilities and armaments policy, in pursuit of greater efficiency, elimination of duplication and reduction of costs and on the basis of a catalogue of very precise capability requirements for CSDP operations and harmonised national defence planning and procurement processes with regard to those specific capabilities; believes this should follow a defence review of Member States' sets of forces and a review of past EDA activities and procedures; calls on the EDA to demonstrate which capability gaps that were identified in the headline goals and capability development plan were filled within the framework of the Agency; is convinced that pooling and sharing initiatives and projects are excellent first steps towards enhanced European cooperation;

19. Encourages the Commission to work in liaison with the EDA to strengthen the industrial and technological base of the defence sector, which is vital for European strategic autonomy; believes that the key to sustaining the industry is an increase in defence spending by Member States, as well as ensuring that the industry remains globally competitive; notes that the current fragmentation of the market represents a weakness for the competitiveness of the European defence industry; believes that collaborative research can help reduce such fragmentation and improve competitiveness;
20. Strongly believes that only a joined-up approach to capability development, including through the consolidation of functional clusters such as European Air Transport Command, can generate the economies of scale that are needed to underpin a European Defence Union; further believes that strengthening the EU's capabilities through joint procurement and other forms of pooling and sharing could provide a much-needed boost to Europe's defence industry, SMEs included; supports targeted measures to incentivise such projects, in order to reach the EDA benchmark of 35 % of total spending in collaborative procurement, as called for by the EU Global Strategy; believes that the introduction of a European Defence Semester, whereby Member States would consult each other's planning cycles and procurement plans, could help overcome the current state of defence market fragmentation;
21. Stresses that cybersecurity is by its very nature a policy area in which cooperation and integration are crucial, not only between EU Member States, key partners and NATO, but also between different actors within society, since it is not only a military responsibility; calls for clearer guidelines on how EU defensive and offensive capabilities are to be used and in what context; recalls that Parliament has repeatedly called for a thorough revision of the EU dual-use export regulation in order to avoid software and other systems which can be used against EU digital infrastructure or to violate human rights falling into the wrong hands;
22. Points to the recent publication by the High Representative of the Global Strategy, which constitutes a cohesive framework for priorities for action in the field of foreign policy and for defining future developments in European defence policy;
23. Recalls the four collective investment benchmarks approved by the EDA Ministerial Steering Board in November 2007, and is concerned at the low level of collaboration, as demonstrated in the Defence Data Report published in 2013;
24. Calls on the VP/HR to take an initiative to bring together major companies and stakeholders of the European defence industry with the aim of developing a European drone industry;
25. Calls on the VP/HR to take an initiative to bring together major companies and stakeholders of the European defence industry to develop strategies and a platform for the joint development of defence equipment;
26. Calls on the VP/HR to enhance cooperation between national cybersecurity strategies, capabilities and command centres and the EDA, as part of permanent structured cooperation to help protect against and counter cyberattacks;
27. Calls for the further development of the EU Cyber Defence Policy Framework in order to boost Member States' cyberdefence capabilities, operational cooperation and information

sharing;

28. Notes the ongoing work on setting up a preparatory action for a future EU defence research programme, and urges its effective launch as soon as possible, as requested by the European Council in 2013 and 2015 and following a pilot project initiated by the EP; stresses that the Preparatory Action should be provided with a sufficient budget, of at least EUR 90 million for the next three years (2017-2020); takes the view that the preparatory action should be followed by a major dedicated EU-funded research programme as part of the next MFF starting in 2021; notes that the European Defence Research Programme will need a total budget of at least EUR 500 million per year over that period in order to be credible and make a substantial difference; calls on the Member States to outline future cooperative programmes in which EU-funded defence research can build a starting point, and calls for the establishment of the start-up fund for preparatory activities in the lead-up to military operations, as provided for in the Lisbon Treaty; notes the Commission's defence-related initiatives such as the Defence Action Plan, the Defence Industrial Policy and the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base;
29. Stresses that the launching of CSDP missions, such as EUNAVFOR MED, contributes to the achievement of a European Defence Union; calls on the EU to continue and step up missions of this kind;
30. Considers it important to use the European Semester procedure to introduce forms of closer cooperation in the field of security and defence;
31. Stresses the importance of putting in place the necessary measures that encourage a functioning, fair, accessible and transparent European defence market that is open to others, promote future technological innovation, support SMEs and stimulate growth and jobs, in order to enable Member States to achieve a much more efficient and effective use and maximisation of their respective defence and security budgets; notes that a solid European defence, technological and industrial base needs a fair, functioning and transparent internal market, security of supply and a structured dialogue with defence-relevant industries; is concerned that progress towards improved competitiveness, anti-corruption measures and greater transparency in the defence sector has been slow so far, and that a sound European defence industrial policy and respect for internal market rules are still lacking; is of the opinion that an integrated and competitive European defence arms market needs to provide incentives and rewards to all Member States and supply all buyers with adequate and affordable means responding to their individual security needs; stresses the need to ensure that the Defence Procurement Directive and the Intra-Community Transfers Directive are correctly applied across the EU; urges the Commission and the Member States to guarantee the full implementation of the two defence-related directives of the so-called 'Defence Package';
32. Calls on the Commission to play its role through the Defence Action Plan, to support a strong industrial base that is able to deliver on the strategic capability needs of Europe, and to identify where the EU could provide added value;
33. Is convinced that in progressively framing the common Union defence policy, the EU should make provision, in agreement with the Member States concerned, for participation in capability programmes they undertake, including participation in the structures created for the execution of those programmes within the Union framework;

34. Encourages the Commission, working in liaison with the EDA, to act as a facilitator and enabler for defence cooperation via the mobilisation of EU funds and instruments aimed at the development of defence capabilities programmes by Member States; recalls that the European Defence Action Plan should be a strategic tool to foster cooperation in defence at European level, in particular through an EU-funded Defence Research Programme and through measures strengthening industrial cooperation across the entire value chain;
35. Warmly welcomes the strategic autonomy concept developed by the VP/HR as part of the EU global strategy; believes that this concept should be applied both in our strategic priorities and in strengthening our capacities and our industry;
36. Welcomes the joint declaration by the presidents of the European Council and the Commission and the NATO Secretary-General of 8 July 2016, which emphasises the need for cooperation between the EU and NATO in the area of security and defence; is convinced that EU-NATO cooperation should involve cooperating in the east and the south, countering hybrid and cyber threats and improving maritime security, as well as harmonising and coordinating the development of defence capabilities; considers that cooperation on technological, industrial and military capabilities offers the prospect of improving compatibility and synergy between both frameworks, thus ensuring greater efficiency of resources; recalls that speedy implementation of the above declaration is essential, and calls in this respect on the EEAS, together with relevant counterparts, to develop concrete options for implementation by December 2016; considers that the Member States should develop capabilities that can be deployable under the CSDP in order to make possible autonomous action in cases where NATO is not willing to act or where an EU action is more appropriate; is convinced that this would also strengthen NATO's role in security and defence policy, and in collective defence; underlines that cooperation between EU and NATO for facilitating a stronger and efficient defence industry and defence research represents a strategic priority and its speedy implementation is crucial; is convinced that working together on prevention, analysis and early detection by means of efficient information and intelligence sharing will increase the EU's capacity to counter threats, including hybrid threats; remains convinced that NATO is the primary provider of security and defence in Europe; emphasises the need to avoid overlaps between NATO and EU instruments; believes that the EU has potential also in civil aspects to make a key difference in unstable regions; insists, however, that while NATO's role is to protect its mainly European members from any external attack, the EU should aspire to be truly able to defend itself and act autonomously if necessary, taking greater responsibility in this by improving equipment, training and organisation;
37. Notes that while NATO must remain the foundation of collective defence in Europe, the political priorities of NATO and the EU may not always be identical, not least in the context of the US pivot to Asia; further notes that the EU possess a unique set of security-related instruments which are not available to NATO, and vice versa; is of the opinion that the EU should assume greater responsibility for security crises in its immediate neighbourhood, and thus contribute to NATO's tasks, especially in the context of hybrid warfare and maritime security; believes that, in the long run, reform of the Berlin Plus arrangements may prove necessary, also to enable NATO to make use of the EU's capabilities and instruments; underlines that the EU's ambition of strategic autonomy and framing a European Defence Union must be realised in full synergy with NATO, and must lead to more effective cooperation, equitable burden-sharing and a productive division of labour between NATO and the EU;

38. Is convinced that EU-NATO cooperation should involve building resilience together in the east and the south as well as defence investment; considers that cooperation on capabilities offers the prospect of improving compatibility and synergy between both frameworks; is convinced that this would also strengthen NATO's role in security and defence policy, and in collective defence;
39. Is deeply concerned over reports that administrative procedures are unnecessarily slowing down the generation of forces for CSDP missions and the cross-border movement of rapid response forces inside the EU; calls on the Member States to establish an EU-wide system for the coordination of rapid movement of defence forces personnel, equipment and supplies for the purposes of the CSDP, where the solidarity clause is invoked and where there is an obligation to provide aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter;
40. Calls for the establishment of practical arrangements and guidelines for future activation of Article 42(7) TEU; calls on the Member States to make the necessary arrangements for the implementation of that article, in order to allow individual Member States to effectively manage other Member States' aid and assistance contributions, or to have them effectively managed within the Union framework; calls on the Member States to aim for the target of 2 % of GDP for defence spending, and to spend 20 % of their defence budgets on equipment identified as necessary through the EDA, including related research and development, thus closing the gap with EDA's four collective investment benchmarks;
41. Is of the opinion that the challenges which financial constraints represent to national budgets are at the same time accompanied by opportunities for progress arising from the evident need for closer cooperation between Member States in defence matters; welcomes the decision by some Member States to stop or reverse the trend to cut defence spending;
42. Believes that Parliament should play a prominent role in the future European Defence Union, and considers, therefore, that the Subcommittee on Security and Defence should become a fully-fledged parliamentary committee;
43. Calls on the VP/HR to launch an EU security and defence White Book which will be based on the EU's global strategy as endorsed by the European Council; asks the Council to assign the task of drafting this document without delay; regrets the suggestion of the VP/HR to the EU defence ministers that there should be only an implementation plan on security and defence instead of a comprehensive White Book process; takes the view that such an implementation plan should be a precursor to a regular security and defence White Book process, which should provide a useful basis for quantifying possible Union contributions in security and defence policy for each legislative term in a specific and realistic manner;
44. Is convinced that the EU security and defence White Book should be the result of coherent intergovernmental and interparliamentary processes and contributions from the various EU institutions, which should be underpinned by international coordination with our partners and allies, including NATO, and by comprehensive interinstitutional support; calls on the VP/HR to revise its initial timetable in order to start a targeted consultation with Member States and parliaments;
45. Considers that, on the basis of the EU global strategy, the White Book should encompass

the EU's security and defence strategy, the capabilities deemed necessary for the deployment of that strategy, and the measures and programmes at both Member State and EU level for delivering those capabilities, which should be based on a collaborative European capabilities and armaments policy while taking into account that defence and security remain a national competency;

46. Takes the view that the White Book should take the form of an interinstitutional agreement of a binding nature which would set out all Union initiatives, investments, measures and programmes across the respective multiannual political and financial framework in the EU; is convinced that Member States, partners and allies should take that interinstitutional agreement into account in their own security and defence planning, with a view to ensuring mutual consistency and complementarity;

Launch initiatives

47. Considers that the following initiatives should be launched immediately:

- the preparatory action on CSDP research starting in 2017, which will be continued until 2019;
- a subsequent more ambitious and strategic defence research programme, bridging the gap to the next MFF, if the necessary additional financial resources are provided by the Member States or through cofinancing from Member States under Article 185 TFEU;
- a European defence semester to assess the progress made in the Member States' defence-related budgetary efforts;
- a strategy outlining the steps to take to realise the establishment and implementation of the European Defence Union;
- consideration of the creation of a permanent Council of defence ministers;
- support for the initiative by NATO which will place multinational battalions in Member States when and where necessary, in particular for the necessary infrastructure development (including housing);
- development of the regular White Book process, for a first application in the framework of the planning of the next MFF;
- a stakeholder conference on the subjects of development of a European armaments and capability policy and harmonisation of the respective national policies on the basis of an EU defence review;
- resolution of the legal issues preventing the implementation of the joint communication on capacity-building to promote security and development in third countries;
- reform of the EU battlegroups concept, aiming at the establishment of permanent units which would be independent of any lead nation and subject to systematic joint training;

- creation of the military start-up fund as foreseen in Article 41(3) TEU, which would help launch military CSDP operations much faster;
- an action plan to strengthen and broaden the Athena mechanism so as to provide more Community funds for EU missions;
- reform of the Athena mechanism aiming at enlarging its potential for cost-sharing and common funding, especially with regard to the deployment of EU battlegroups or of other rapid response assets and to building the capacity of military actors in partner countries (training, mentoring, advice, provision of equipment, infrastructure improvement and other services);
- a reflection process on foreign direct investment in critical industries in the defence and security field and on service providers, with a view to developing EU-level legislation;
- a reflection process on dual-use standardisation with a view to developing EU-level legislation;
- a reflection on establishing a permanent headquarters for command and control for CSDP military operations;
- an EU-wide system for the coordination of the rapid movement of defence forces' personnel, equipment and supplies;
- initial elements of the European Defence Action Plan, to be based on an EU White Book on Security and Defence;
- initial EU-NATO projects on countering and preventing hybrid threats and on building resilience, on cooperation on strategic communications and response, on operational cooperation including at sea and on migration, on coordination on cybersecurity and defence, on defence capabilities, on strengthening the defence technological, research and industrial base, on exercises, and on building the defence and security capacity of our eastern and southern partners;
- measures to increase cooperation and trust between cybersecurity and defence actors;

48. Proposes that the European Defence Union be launched as a matter of urgency, in two stages and on the basis of a system of differentiated integration:

- (a) activation of permanent structured cooperation, which has already been approved by Parliament and included in the Commission President's 'New Start' programme;
- (b) implementation of the action plan for the VP/HR's global foreign policy and security strategy;

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49. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for

Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the EU agencies in the space, security and defence fields, and the national parliaments.