Nato summit: "I know there is a commitment from the Europeans"

The Nato summit on 11-12 July is taking place amid mixed expectations. Will allies be able to demonstrate unity? We asked Ioan Mircea Paşcu, who was in charge of a report on EU and Nato.

The resolution on EU-Nato relations by Romanian S&D member Paşcu was adopted by MEPs on 18 June. We discussed the summit with him on 10 July.

Since 2015, the EU’s Nato members have been increasing their defence spending, but in the run up to the summit, US President Donald Trump sent sharply worded letters demanding that European countries spend more. Does he have a point?

Generally, yes. I think that we sacrificed defence for other needs immediately after the crisis in 2007-2008. Now we have started to address the problem. The figures are there. I think the criterion would be if we manage to increase defensive capacity through our spending.

Things are a little bit more complex than us underspending and the US doing everything for us. I think that during this summit we will see what the real ground is on which we have to act together.

What result would you call a success for the Nato summit?

Success would be that nothing like the G7 summit happens. I am confident that the complexity of the problems on the table and the fact that you cannot just close your eyes, but you have to deal with them will bring both sides together. I know there is a commitment from the Europeans and I hope it will come from the US. After all, the US is the backbone of our alliance and Europe’s security depends on American guarantees.

In your report on EU-Nato relations, you name several areas of cooperation. Which are the three most important ones and how should cooperation develop?
Military mobility, cyber security and how to really spark more cooperation and industrial innovation are the most important ones. The common budget for industrial innovation is quite a departure in this regard. Until now, this was a national prerogative and now the European Commission steps in and is facilitating cooperation at the level of the firms and defence producers.

The figures which are envisaged are encouraging. The next [EU's long-term budget] will make a difference by stimulating defence companies to be more cooperative and innovative.

So for the time being we just broke the ice and it will certainly grow in the future and produce more security and strengthen the cooperation in the EU and it’s not contrary to Nato! Everything we do here is also helping Nato because we have only one set of forces, which we have to share more or less.

Security is more and more complex and we have to address all those dimensions: internal security, clearly an EU prerogative, but also external security, which is mainly a Nato prerogative. And we have to take into account EU countries that are not members of Nato. We have to defend them too.

Find out more
Briefing on Nato summit
Factsheet on EU-Nato relations