

## **NATO 3.0 can only be built with a European Defence Union**

Since last year, non-US allies have increased their defence spending by 139 billion USD. Several will reach their 3,5% targets ahead of schedule, but as the Secretary General of NATO said on June 25: "Russia is not afraid of commitments, but of capabilities".

This is why in the Ankara summit, NATO will discuss how to turn increased spending into concrete capabilities. Meanwhile the US is withdrawing key capabilities: 5,000 troops will be removed from Germany, and the deployment of a long-range fire battalion was cancelled. A six-month review of the entire US force posture is next, which is expected to include the withdrawal of many strategic enablers like air-to air tankers, bombers and an aircraft carrier.

NATO is and should continue to be the backbone of European deterrence and defence. The European countries in NATO should work together with the EU and ensure the 'European pillar of NATO' is not just a slogan, but able to defend every centimetre of European territory.

NATO will not survive if Europeans simply buy more (American) weapons. Europe needs to supplement the US capabilities that hold the alliance together. With two self-sufficient pillars, one (North)-American, one European, separable but not separate, NATO will become stronger.

The way to make this happen is a European Defense Union, not as an alternative to, but a condition for NATO 3.0. European leaders should do three concrete things today with the ambition that matches the threat level and the *speed of relevance*:

Firstly, our **decision-making structures** must have the speed to give our armed forces the mandates to respond decisively to any threat. A European Security Council made up of EU and non-EU members, with fast and decisive political leadership, could coordinate defence planning and marshal the necessary economic and military resources in wartime.

Secondly, a **Europeanised command and control structure** can support an independent, theatre-wide European deterrence and defence. Preferably using NATO structures and systems, if necessary separate. This includes operationalising the EU's mutual defence clause (article 42.7), regular exercises, a rapid reaction force, and upgrading the EU's MPCC.

Thirdly, **European strategic enablers** can fill the most critical capability gaps in our defence that are too expensive for a single member state. By pooling national defence spending, we can procure, maintain and operate them together. AWACS, IRIS2 and the MRTT give precedents.

All three are compatible, empowering NATO structures and their continuing Europeanisation, for example with EU strategic enablers providing HQ AIRCOM with permanently available assets.

At the last NATO summit in the Hague, Europeans agreed how much we have to spend to keep us safe. This should be the NATO summit where we finally agree what to spend it on. Let's not wait for war to unite us, let's unite to prevent war!

**This is a joint statement by the following Members of the European Parliament, who are also part of the European Defence Union Network (EDUMEP)**

- Marie Agnes Strack Zimmerman (Renew)
- Rasa Juknevičienė (EPP)
- Matej Tonin (EPP)
- Wouter Beke (EPP)
- Pekka Toveri (EPP)
- Lukas Mandl (EPP)
- Thijs Reuten (S&D)
- Idoia Mendia (S&D)
- José Cepeda (S&D)
- Hilde Vautmans (Renew)
- Dainius Žalimas (Renew)
- Bernard Guetta (Renew)
- Lukas Sieper (Renew)
- Sandro Gozi (Renew)
- Raquel García Hermida-van der Walle (Renew)
- Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (Renew)
- Lucia Yar (Renew)
- Anna-Maja Henriksson (Renew)
- Bart Groothuis (Renew)
- Sergey Lagodinski (Greens)
- Martins Stakis (Greens)
- Reinier van Lanschot (Greens)
- Damian Boeselager (Greens)
- Anna Strolenberg (Greens)
- Nela Riehl (Greens)
- Kai Tegethoff (Greens)
- Ville Niinistö (Greens)
- Hannah Neumann (Greens)
- Daniel Freund (Greens)
- Merja Kyllönen (The Left)