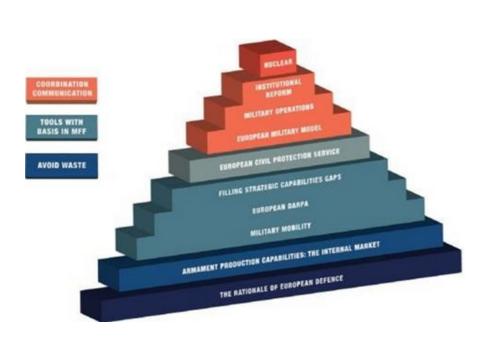# [8.] PLENARY 4. BUILDING A VIABLE EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE (IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WILFRIED MARTENS CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES)

Europe is facing its most serious security crisis since the Second World War, underlined by Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. In addition, growing tensions with Russia in the Arctic, deepening cooperation between Russia and China, rising tensions in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, as well as climate change and global pandemics, illustrate an increasingly dangerous geopolitical environment for the European Union. Against this background, Europe needs to develop a new concept of a comprehensive security architecture, integrating civilian and military components, capable of protecting and responding to hybrid and conventional threats, both from its immediate neighbourhood (Russia and the Middle East) and from systemic attacks by non-democratic forces.

COORDINATION COMMUNICATION

TOOLS WITH BASIS IN MFF

AVOID WASTE

NUCLEAR

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

MILITARY OPERATIONS

EUROPEAN MILITARY MODEL

EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION SERVICE

FILLING STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES GAPS

EUROPEAN DARPA

MILITARY MOBILITY

ARMAMENT PRODUCTION CAPABILITIES: THE INTERNAL MARKET

THE RATIONALE OF EUROPEAN DEFENCE

On top of this, the growing isolationist tendencies of the United States and its strategic pivot to the Indo-Pacific are accompanied by high expectations for the Europeans to redouble their contribution to European security and become credible security actors for the protection of the continent. While NATO remains the indispensable security "shield", the European pillar must be systematically built. To ensure European security against all 360-degree security threats, we need both organisations to work in a complementary way. As such, the EU as an organisation can help build a robust political consensus among European leaders for a European defence market, but also the legal and financial infrastructure needed to address structural weaknesses in Europe's current defence capabilities.

To achieve this, the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies proposes to create a fully capable European Defence Union through a structured, step-by- step process of strengthening essential building blocks ('DefencePyramid') (see figure).

This approach systematically addresses weaknesses by following ten specific components. Having recognised the need for a European Defence Union, the next stage requires the EU to take essential action: reducing waste through Europe-wide military procurement, ensuring efficient cross-border logistics activities and becoming competitive in military- related research through a European DARPA (Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency). Thirdly, in order to provide protection on a European scale, a European civil protection service should be established. Fourthly, the development of the European Defence Union should be completed and made fully operational by

filling the strategic capability gap, developing a military model, initiating a reform of military missions and carrying out an institutional reform. Finally, the issue of the EU's nuclear deterrence needs to be addressed.

**This paper focuses on six key building blocks:**
- An integrated market for armament production
- An EU framework for an enhance military mobility (transport and logistics capabilities)
- Laying the foundation for the next generation of defence technologies (a European DARPA)
- Introducing a European Civil Protection Service
- Designing a European MilitaryModel
- An Institutional reform of the EU governance system to reflect the new importance of security and defence.

The next section describes these dimensions, the current capability gaps and the policy recommendations in more detail. For the full concept of a European Defence Union see here.

**Building a stronger European Defence Pillar Towards an integrated market for armament production.**

The huge demand for a wide range of military equipment and ammunition, both to support Ukraine's defensive fight and to replenish European stocks, has highlighted the shortcomings of the current supply structure and capabilities in the European defence industry.

In the past, many efforts to create a defence market have failed, leaving the industry far from being able to compete globally and benefit from economies of scale. Despite recent initiatives by the EU Commission, such as the PESCO projects and the European Defence Industry Strategy, progress has been slow.

While the US benefits from a common market for defence products and relieson just over 30 major combat systems, the EU has over 170 different systems due to fragmentation and competition between member states. This results in smaller production scales, higher unit costs and diffused research and development resources in the EU.

With war returning to Europe and uncertain US support, military effectiveness and timeliness are top priorities. As such, European policymakers and defence companies must drastically change their procurement processes and business models. Key areas of collective defence where the EU can contribute and fill the gaps include land warfare equipment, digitisation and electronic warfare, integrated air and missile defence, logistics (including specialised vehicles), long- range missiles and deep strike precision weapons.

**To achieve this, several steps should be implemented:**
a)   Declare and deliver a defence decade with more investment and less regulations. This would require to use NATO defence planningas the gold standard; use regulation as enabler to strengthen or flexibilize unleashed industrial and technological potential; re-balance economic efficiency and military effectiveness.
b)   Shaping the industrial base with a focus on quantity which can be achieved by a focus on the urgentneed and the support; and by integrating Ukraine into European defence industrial base.
c)   EU must become a relevant buyer and lender in the defence sector. This would require creating an Amazon for Defence (an automatic marketplace for defence commodities), enabling and sustaining critical infrastructure, and buying the needed capabilities for logistics.

**EU framework for an enhanced military mobility (logistics and transport capacities)**

With the Russian war on Ukraine, we have the return of full-scale conflict to the European continent and a shift in Europe's security and defence towards territorial defence. Hence, military mobility has become a top priority for NATO, the European Union and their member states. Military mobility simply put combines all activities aimed at ensuring the swift movementof armed forcesand military equipment across the member states. Moreover, this is also an important factor of a credible deterrence posture: being able to move troops quickly will deter any potential adversary from taking military action.

In the previous decade, EU has developed several initiatives and instruments to advance military mobility such as: the 2018 EU Action Plan on military mobility, the EU member states undertook a military mobility pledge at the June 2018 Foreign Affairs Council and a PESCO project on military mobility was also launched in 2018 aiming to enhance cooperation among member states. Military mobility also received significant attention in the framework of the EU-NATO cooperation, being included in the EU-NATO common set of proposals for implementing the 2016 EU-NATO Joint Declaration.

But more can be done to cover the current weaknesses in the logistics and transport capabilities of the member states such as:
- Develop a lessons-learned process aimed at helping both the EU and NATO benefit from what the war in Ukraine demonstrates in terms of military mobility;
- Set up exchanges on military mobility between senior leaders of the EU and NATO to assess progress and explore ways of advancing cooperation;
- Prioritise military mobility in the security and defence dialogues with partners;
- Laying the foundation for next-generation defence technologies through a European DARPA

Leadership in technological innovation has become a crucial aspect of geopolitical power, with the US and China leading the way and the EU lagging behind. This technological race has implications for political order, economic competitiveness and national security. As emerging and disruptive technologies become an important elementof defence superiority, the future of warfare will be highly technological. As such, future military capabilities will depend heavily on technological advances, and the European Union needs to develop its technological edge to remain a global actor.

Comparing investments in emerging and disruptive technologies, the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), a US agency responsible for defence innovation, had a budget of $3.8 billion in 2022, while the EU's funding is much lower,only a few hundred millioneuros. To remaincompetitive and fulfil its strategic responsibilities, the EU must adopt a DARPA-like model, which requires strong political commitment, a long-term vision and a culture of risk- taking. Without fostering its own defence innovation, the EU risks losing global influence.

**To create a European DARPA, the EU needs to raise its level of ambition and start by:**

a) Focusing on governance and legislation by creating a legal framework for its independence from traditional EU bureaucratic structures, establishing a strategic roadmap and adopting a risk-tolerant approach.

b) Providing resources by allocating substantial budgets, attracting and retaining top talent and implementing a flexible funding architecture.

c) Improving collaboration and oversight by promoting open innovation, partnering with NATO's Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) for mutual accessto expertise and resources, and establishing a robust framework for monitoring and evaluating the impact of its funded research projects.

**Institutional reform of the EU governance system reflecting the new importance of security and defence**

Since Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine in 2022, the EU Commission has remarkably increased its involvement in defence policy, which would have been hard to imagine three years ago. However, constitutional and institutional obstacles still prevent joint efforts at EU level. The next Commission must give defence a clear institutional reform.

The EU's current institutional set-up, with its cumbersome decision-making process, lack of a single defence budget and resistance to treaty change weakens its response to geopolitical threats. Institutional reform won't completely solve this collective action problem, but it can help to make strategies and defence planning more coherent, achieve economies of scale and encourage specialisation.

Specifically, the next steps for EU institutional reform in the field of defence should:
- Ensure that the Foreign Affairs Council meetings of Defence Ministers are held every month.
- Create the post of European Commissioner for Defence Cooperation after the European Parliament elections in June 2024. This Commissioner would work closely with the next High Representative/Vice-President of the European Commission.
- Transform the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) into a fully-fledged EP Committee (CEDE).

**CONCLUSIONS**

Europe is facing its most serious security crisis since the Second World War, highlighted by Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and rising global tensions. To meet these threats, Europe needs to create a robust European Defence Union that enhances military capabilities, improves military mobility and strengthens defence innovation and research.

Building a strong European pillar will not replace NATO's security umbrella,but it will finally make Europe's responsibility for its own security a reality.

EU institutional reformand the restructuring of the European defence industry are essential to prevent fragmentation among Member States and to enable a rapid and effective response to security challenges. Streamlining strategies and defence planning, achieving economies of scale and promoting specialisation are key to building a robust and responsive European defence framework.