

## European Security and Defence – remaining Transatlantic, acting more European

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### The Netherlands – partner country of the Berlin Security Conference 2018

(BSC/H.E. Wepke Kingma, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Germany) The Netherlands is delighted to be the partner country of the 2018 Berlin Security Conference (BSC). The backdrop to this year's conference is one of growing insecurity among our citizens and increasingly active authorities which are trying to tackle the new threats our countries face. At the 2017 BSC, no one could have predicted that in 2018 we would be seeing a horrific attack with a chemical weapon, carried out in broad daylight in the streets of a European city – or a brazen cyberattack against a vital multilateral organisation. This, unfortunately, is the dangerous and tumultuous security environment that we find ourselves in today.

There are several fundamental developments underlying the current security environment. Geopolitical power structures are changing. Countries with different perspectives on governance, rule of law and human rights than western democracies have become increasingly vocal and active on the international stage. The same can be seen in the cyber realm, where state actors or actors with close links to states use cyberattacks in order to engage in espionage, manipulation and sabotage. Through such attacks, adversaries try to harm our democratic rules-based order, our economic earning capacity and our vital infrastructure. The consequences go far beyond national borders; they also affect other security interests and the multilateral order advocated by democratic Western states.

To defend our democratic interests, our countries need to become more resilient. It is clear that greater security will require extra investment in alliances and military capabilities that can deter – and if need be respond to – aggression.

That brings me to the title of 2018's BSC: 'European Security and Defence: remaining Transatlantic, acting more European.' We need both a strong NATO and a self-assured European Union that work closely together to ensure we have greater defence capabilities that function as an effective deterrent. A strong NATO, where all member states take their share of responsibility, is an essential guarantee for our security. The United States remains an indispensable ally in this respect, and it is essential that we strengthen our transatlantic cooperation in order to counter new threats.

We are seeing that NATO member states are currently stepping up their commitment and are investing more in the Alliance. And this year Europe has taken several important steps on European security and defence that show that it is taking security concerns seriously and is both willing and able to take on more responsibility. The EU has launched Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and has selected a range of projects that will foster the development of new defence capabilities. The Netherlands is spearheading the PESCO project on military mobility, which will improve cross-border transport of military troops and equipment in Europe. We want to be able to move them as efficiently and quickly as possible. Improving mobility is essential for rapid and effective crisis response. But efforts on military mobility are by no means confined to the EU: we are also pursuing our mobility aims in the context of NATO, through EU-NATO relations and through bilateral relations between member states. Military mobility is therefore a perfect example of combining transatlantic cooperation with European ambitions.

These and other initiatives aimed at strengthening Europe's responsibility for its security are necessary steps, but they also entail some concerns that need to be addressed. One risk is that the goals we set for ourselves do not match our defence capabilities in practice. There has always been a gap between our ambitions and our capabilities, but given the current security environment we should recognise that the gap is undesirable and needs to be bridged more rapidly. Another risk is that many of our initiatives and projects require time to implement. The public and our allies understandably want to see tangible results achieved in a limited amount of time, yet that may not always be possible. This means that European security and defence projects need to be conducted in ongoing consultation with both the public and our allies. This will help manage expectations, broaden the support base underpinning our projects and ensure legitimacy is not lost.

The Netherlands is known as an active partner in the field of security and defence, and a strong defender of international and multilateral cooperation. This is closely linked to the Netherlands' long history as a trading nation. We are also keen to maintain and promote the international rule of law. After all, The Hague is renowned as the international legal capital of the world. In 2018, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, we have made a significant contribution to international peace and security. One of our priorities in the Council has been to help ensure that UN peacekeeping missions are supplied with sufficient and reliable capabilities, and that effective rotation mechanisms are developed to help increasingly complex UN missions sustain their activities. I also highlight the active military cooperation between the Netherlands and Germany in different missions such as in Mali and Afghanistan, or in Enhanced Forward Presence, and our exemplary binational defence cooperation.

I am convinced that my country will remain a strong security partner moving forward. Earlier this year, the Dutch government produced a new Integrated International Security Strategy, which underpins our contribution to international security and will guide our actions beyond our own borders. The Strategy recognises today's difficult and diverse security environment. It outlines our ambition to prevent the root causes of instability, build modern and effective self-defence capabilities and strengthen the foundations of our security.

We will continue working to improve international cooperation, maintain multilateral agreements and engage in dialogue with all parties, in the conviction that a strong multilateral order will benefit us all. We want to do so in an open and transparent way, through people-oriented approaches and inclusive policies.

As in other forums, at the 2018 Berlin Security Conference we aim to practise what we preach. We are counting on an open and constructive exchange with a wide range of security stakeholders. Many high-ranking Dutch representatives will join the conference to both listen to what the participants have to say and to engage in frank debate about current security challenges, all with the aim of advancing common solutions. In addition, representatives of top firms in the Dutch defence industry will be present to share their insights and show how their innovations can help to create a more secure world.