

**LETTER OF INTENT  
BETWEEN  
THE DEFENCE MINISTERS OF  
BELGIUM,  
DENMARK,  
ESTONIA,  
FRANCE,  
GERMANY  
THE NETHERLANDS,  
PORTUGAL,  
SPAIN,  
AND THE  
UNITED KINGDOM  
CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE EUROPEAN INTERVENTION INITIATIVE (EI2)**

## **The Strategic Context**

1. Europe is facing a highly unstable and uncertain strategic environment, subject to sweeping changes. It has to deal with the greatest concentration of challenges since the end of the Cold War, including an increasing terrorist threat, major migration crises, persistent vulnerabilities in its Southern region, from the Mediterranean to the Sahel-Sahara region, enduring destabilisation in the Middle East, resumption of open warfare on its doorstep and displays of force on its territory, including stemming from intimidation strategy, on its Eastern Flank and increasing natural disasters.
2. These are destabilizing factors that need to be tackled to better protect our citizens, and therefore European states have to take on greater responsibility for their own security, hence the necessity to better coordinate our efforts and to foster our capacity to better anticipate, prepare, plan and act together when and where necessary.
3. This strategic assessment is particularly clear for European able and willing states that share security interests and actively support European endeavors, including through the European Union's significant new initiatives, in order to consolidate European strategic autonomy and freedom of decision and action, as well as reinforce NATO, which remains the cornerstone of our collective defence.
4. Our states have consistently demonstrated their willingness and their ability to swiftly deploy effective military capabilities and act together in various scenarios across the whole range of potential conflicts and crises affecting Europe's security, in different frameworks. The progress achieved in the last few years in strengthening European Defence has been significant. Nevertheless, further steps need to be taken. We therefore intend to develop together the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) in order to enhance our collective strategic response.

## **Aim of the European Intervention Initiative**

5. EI2 is a flexible, non-binding forum of European participating states which are able and willing to engage their military capabilities and forces when and where necessary to protect European security interests, without prejudice to the chosen institutional framework (the EU, NATO, the UN or *ad hoc* coalitions).
6. The ultimate objective of EI2 is to develop a shared strategic culture, which will enhance our ability, as European states, to carry out military missions and operations under the framework of the EU, NATO, the UN and/or *ad hoc* coalition. Intensifying and deepening contacts between EI2 participating states will facilitate future military engagements, which remain fully subject to sovereign national decisions in accordance with each state's respective constitutional processes.
7. In particular, EI2 will enable better links and closer cooperation between the armed forces of European states that are willing and able to carry out international military missions and operations, throughout the spectrum of crises. The initiative will focus on enhanced interaction in four main fields: (i) strategic foresight and intelligence sharing, (ii) scenario development and planning, (iii) support to operations and (iv) lessons learned and doctrine.
8. EI2 will contribute to reinforce bilateral defence relationships as well as joint efforts carried out within the framework of key multilateral organizations such as the EU, NATO and the UN or *ad hoc* initiatives. EI2 intends to contribute to on-going efforts within the European Union to deepen defence cooperation, notably PESCO as detailed in paragraph 9, and may reinforce and draw from the work conducted through the NATO Framework Nation Concept (FNC). It will not duplicate those efforts, but will add to them. EI2 will strive to identify possible improvements for European Defence as well as the best institutional forum how to achieve those, in order to be

quicker and more efficient. Denmark will participate in full respect of the Danish opt-out from the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy.

9. E12 participating states will strive to ensure that E12 serves the objectives and projects of PESCO to the maximum extent possible, while taking into consideration national legal constraints and the issue of third parties' access to PESCO. While PESCO will inevitably produce beneficial effects for E12, we will seek to identify, as soon as possible, relevant areas of cooperation within the E12 framework that can merge with existing PESCO projects or constitute new ones, for example in the area of support to operations.

10. Military staff talks will provide regular assessments and recommendations in line with common security interests and possible actions.

11. E12 does not entail the creation of a new rapid reaction force. Considering that our nations have only one single set of forces, E12 states will rely on existing standing rapid reaction / intervention forces, in line with the appropriate decision-making process. E12 will not earmark national forces for its own response purposes.

12. E12 will strengthen our ability to better operate together. It will reinforce participating states' ability to be better prepared for missions and operations conducted in the framework of the EU, NATO, UN or other *ad hoc* coalitions in which nations wish to commit forces. It could also encourage the efficient deployment of existing and future military capabilities and units. The assignment of forces from E12 participating states to specific missions and operations will always remain a sovereign national decision.

13. E12 will be resource-neutral. It will rely on existing structures and a network of liaison officers in the various military structures of the participating states.

14. Eventually, thanks to a better mutual understanding of military needs, E12 will help in aligning European states' operational requirements and thus may facilitate the common development of capabilities, by using those already existing tools.

15. E12 will be open to other European states, willing to share the strategic objectives of the Initiative, and showing proper commitment and adequate level of operational capabilities.

### **Arrangements for the development of the E12**

16. By signing this Letter of Intent, we, Defence Ministers from the participating states, pledge our full support to and involvement in E12 and our intent to contribute to the four agreed work strands.

17. In order to reach the objectives of E12, we decide to establish a light E12 Permanent secretariat in Paris based on French personnel and on the existing network of national liaison officers in the various military structures of the French MoD (possibly complemented by national voluntary contributions), to oversee policy and objectives, and to coordinate actions along the different lines of cooperation.

18. We, Defence Ministers of participating states, direct our staff to start drafting an E12 Foundation Memorandum of Understanding as soon as possible, detailing the modalities of each state's participation to E12.

Signed in nine copies on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018.



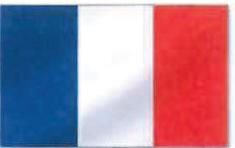
Voor het Koninkrijk België  
Pour le Royaume de Belgique  
Für das Königreich Belgien



For Kongeriget Danmark



Eesti Vabariigi nimel



Pour la République française :



Für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland



Voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden



Pela República Portuguesa



Por el Reino de España



For the United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Northern Ireland