

Declaration of Intent

between

the Federal Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany

and

the Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

on the

further Enhancement of Bilateral Relations in the Field of Security and Defence

The Federal Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany
and
the Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

declare that

the Declaration of Intent between the Federal Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on the further Enhancement of Bilateral Relations in the Field of Defence, signed 28 May 2013, has been comprehensively fulfilled. We welcome the positive developments since 2013 and take them as a visible sign of the excellent relations between Germany and the Netherlands.

We highlight and confirm these excellent relations, which will provide a solid basis for the continued development of German-Netherlands cooperation in the future, sharing the understanding that a renewal of the 2013 Declaration of Intent addresses new security challenges and gives new impulses for the further development of our strong cooperation.

We

- understand that our security and defence environment has changed since 2014. More attention has to be given again to national and collective defence, while we will have to continue to conduct crisis management operations and missions;
- are committed to NATO, and agree that the Alliance has been and will remain the cornerstone of our security and defence;
- are committed to strengthening the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as a crucial contribution to European security;
- agree that the close partnership between the Netherlands and Germany has been an excellent example of defence cooperation within NATO and the EU. Our partnership will continue to strengthen the European pillar of NATO, contribute to European security and enhance Europe's resilience against all security threats;
- strive for the development of common positions in international organisations; share a firm belief in a rules-based international order and in multilateralism with the United Nations at its heart and are mindful of our rights and obligations under the Charter of the United Nations.

Consequently, we agree that the defence relationship between Germany and the Netherlands has a very strong bilateral, European, and transatlantic rationale. Further strengthening and deepening our cooperation is in our mutual interest.

Security and Defence Policy

We are convinced of the inseparable character of our security and defence interests. These common interests and our shared values will remain the firm basis of our bilateral relationship and of our advanced cooperation in the future. On this basis we will synchronise our security and defence objectives, hence strengthening NATO, the EU and the European security landscape in general.

On this strong, common foundation, and in order to achieve our common objectives, we will develop courses of action and identify the required assets and capabilities. We will seek to define common positions in international organisations, structures and fora on any important decision, in accordance with our respective national rules and while respecting national sovereignty.

Furthermore, we will continue to work closely together to facilitate a comprehensive process of further strengthening CSDP towards providing a common and comprehensive foundation for all EU defence initiatives, including Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD), turning the EU into an increasingly credible security provider. We are especially committed to maintaining transparency between the EU and NATO and achieving even closer and more focused EU-NATO cooperation.

Capability Development and Procurement

Therefore, the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and the EU defence initiatives and activities including the Capability Development Plan (CDP) will be the basis for a harmonisation of common research and development as well as technology activities in order to synchronise our capability development. In consequence, in order to ensure interoperability, reduce costs, enhance sustainability and efficiency, we strive for common procurement and configuration, both bilaterally and with partners. We strongly support the corresponding NATO and EU initiatives and intend to harmonise and synchronise them.

Together, we will promote the competitiveness and consolidation of Europe's defence industrial and technological base. To this end, we will facilitate close cooperation between our defence industries based on mutual trust whilst acknowledging our respective strengths.

Operational Commitments

In view of our strategic and operational approach to multinational operations, we declare our willingness to extend cooperation, particularly in future operations and missions, within the scope of German and Dutch law.

We will intensify combined education, training and exercises as well as the mutual exchange of plans, knowledge and lessons learned in order to substantially improve mutual understanding between our armed forces. To generate combat-ready forces efficiently and effectively, particular attention will be paid to command and control, common planning, preparations and pre-deployment training and exercises.

We strive to intensify our common engagement in NATO, the EU, the UN, the OSCE and other international organisations and operational commitments. In particular, we will deepen our cooperation within the adapted NRF (aNRF), including the NATO Readiness Initiative (NRI), the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force Land (VJTF (L)) and the Standing NATO Maritime Groups (SNMG), the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), within NATO operations like Resolute Support as well as within EU-led operations and missions and the EU Battlegroup.

Cooperation on Key Challenges

The rules-based international order is challenged by state and non-state actors. Their activities are often intended to weaken our democratic societies and directed against our vulnerabilities by creating instability or igniting the population's mistrust towards the ability of our governments to protect them.

In order to deter and to respond swiftly, firmly, and effectively to increasingly sophisticated hybrid and cyber threats, we will enhance the exchange of information on and common analysis of these threats and strive for common positions in NATO and the EU.

Bilateral Working Structures

We will intensify our close relations at all levels from the Defence Ministers' to the working level. In particular, cooperation at the executive level as well as meetings in the "High Level Steering Group" (HLSG) format should be used in a more effective way.

The exchange of military and civilian personnel at all levels, including cadets and students, is the prerequisite for a more profound integration. To this end, we will examine further possibilities of exchanging, educating, training and exercising our personnel and strive for a mutual acceptance of each other's qualifications and certifications.

We welcome the ongoing exchange between the defence committees of both our parliaments. The same applies to the exchange between the German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces ("Wehrbeauftragter des Deutschen Bundestages") and the Inspector General of the Netherlands Armed Forces.

We need to develop administrative, financial and legal arrangements to harmonise procedures in order to use our resources as efficiently as possible. Ultimately, these efforts will contribute to the safety and security of our personnel. The already existing Framework Agreement on Bilateral Defence Cooperation should be the basis for further development.

Conclusion

We are firmly convinced that the further development of our cooperation will contribute to enhancing our common response to shared challenges and will have a positive impact on transatlantic and European security and defence. Bearing in mind that today's security challenges can be tackled more effectively in multilateral formats, we explicitly welcome additional partners supporting and extending our bilaterally agreed direction.

We declare our intent to:

- continue the mutually beneficial, professional and friendly partnership in both our interest and
- consult one another, with the objective of defining common positions, on any important decision relevant to our security interests and acting together whenever possible.

Roadmap

Following this firm commitment to further expanding and deepening our cooperation, we will agree on a roadmap to achieve tangible results. This roadmap is a living, non-exhaustive document which will be regularly updated by the High Level Steering Group.

Signed in duplicate in Berlin on 21 May 2019

Dr Ursula von der Leyen
Federal Minister of Defence
of the Federal Republic of Germany

Ank Bijleveld-Schouten
Minister of Defence
of the Kingdom of the Netherlands