

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**

Recognising the evolving geopolitical context and the changed security and defence environment in and around Europe, particular in light of Russia's aggression against Ukraine;

Reaffirming that NATO is and remains the cornerstone of our collective security;

Resolved to strengthening the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as a crucial contribution to European security;

Convinced that the close partnership between the Netherlands and Germany has been and will remain a strong example of defence cooperation within NATO and the EU, which will further strengthen the European pillar of NATO and enhance Europe's resilience;

Committed to continue and further enhance our excellent bilateral defence cooperation in order to ensure a higher degree of interoperability;

Striving to develop common positions in international organisations and frameworks;

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 Security and Defence, signed on 21 May 2019, requires an update as its annexed roadmap has been comprehensively fulfilled.

Confirm that this renewal of the 2019 Declaration of Intent addresses new security challenges and gives new impetus for the further development of our strong cooperation.

Security and Defence Policy

Germany and The Netherlands share many values and interests in the field of defence. We have a shared interest in upholding the fundamental principles of international law, in safeguarding European security and in strengthening European and Transatlantic Cooperation.

These common interests continue to be the firm basis of our bilateral relations and the core of our enhanced cooperation.

On this strong, common foundation we will seek to synchronise our security and defence objectives, in order to strengthen NATO, the EU, and European security in general.

We will seek to define common positions and, where possible, act together within and/or with NATO, the EU, the UN, OSCE, and other international organisations and multilateral frameworks such as the Northern Group, the European Intervention Initiative (EII), the Framework Nation Concept (FNC) and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). We will strengthen the European pillar within NATO and work towards even closer cooperation, coordination and complementarity between NATO and EU, as set out in the EU's Strategic Compass and NATO's Strategic Concept, whilst maintaining sovereign national defence policies. We will continue to work closely together to facilitate strengthening the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), providing a common and comprehensive basis for all EU defence initiatives, as set out in the Strategic Compass.

Cooperation in a changed security environment

The rules-based international order is being challenged by both state and non-state actors. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has radically changed our security environment. We are witnessing increasingly sophisticated hybrid and cyber threats, while at the same time conventional threats are on the rise again. International cooperation is critical in addressing these common threats and challenges.

Our bilateral and multilateral support to Ukraine is an example of appropriate and valuable joint efforts. Through joint delivery, training and maintenance of military systems and joint procurement we can respond effectively. Our support and commitment will remain as long as it takes.

Our close bilateral cooperation and especially the integration of three Dutch army combat brigades within German army divisions is unique and serves as an example for the further development of European defence cooperation. We will strive for more interchangeability of German and Netherlands Forces by enhancing our interoperability through common capability development. In our procurement, we will therefore foster capabilities that enhance our interoperability, within NATO and within the EU. We will seek capabilities that support

multinational defence cooperation to ensure interoperability, operational (combat) effectiveness, reduce costs, and increase sustainability. We will promote close cooperation between our defence industries based on mutual trust whilst acknowledging our respective strengths and interests.

Capability Development

We underline the importance of NATO's Strategic Concept and will work together to ensure NATO's collective defence and credible deterrence, as well as the NATO Force Model, in particular the operational readiness of the "Division 2025". In light of this cooperation, we underline the need to resolve bilateral legal issues or other challenges in order to achieve the greatest possible mutual recognition and use of qualifications and certifications and in order to maximize the interoperability of our armed forces.

We will deepen our cooperation on defence planning within NATO's Defence Planning Process (NDPP), creating a set of capabilities that will enable us to achieve operational capability requirements in order to provide operational and capable forces, inter alia for the NATO deterrence and defence plans. In this regard we will foster the initiatives within NATO to increase interoperability and standardization.

We commit to continue and strengthen our close cooperation within EU frameworks for capability development and joint procurement, such as Capability Development Plan (CDP), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), the European Defence Fund, PESCO, and future programmes and instruments, including the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act (EDIRPA).

Cooperation in operations and missions, exercises and training

We express our desire to expand our cooperation and engagement in operations and missions within the framework of the respective national laws and decision-making processes.

We will intensify combined training and exercises as well as the mutual exchange of plans, knowledge and lessons learned in order to substantially improve mutual understanding and interoperability between our armed forces. We will continue our joint training efforts for Ukraine under the European Union Training Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM UKR).

We will deepen our cooperation within both NATO and EU operations and missions, including the implementation of NATO's Regional Plans, NATO's enhanced Forward Presence in Lithuania, the EUFOR operation ALTHEA, the EU Battlegroup, and the NATO Mission Iraq (NMI). In the land-domain our continued presence in Lithuania remains a key example of strengthening NATO's defensive posture.

We will maintain a global outlook, focussing not just on Europe, but also on - amongst other regions - the Indo-Pacific, West Africa and the Sahel.

Bilateral Working Structures

We highly value the ever-growing cooperation between our Armed Forces. The recent integration of 13 (NLD) Light Brigade into the 10 (DEU) Panzerdivision in March 2023 will further enhance interchangeability between our Armies. The long-standing cooperation between both Navies will further contribute to the interoperability of our armed forces. Ongoing re-structuring measures for the Netherlands Marine Corps and the German Seebataillon will be evaluated in order to assess potential and limitations for joint operational deployments and interoperability. We also welcome the initiatives to enhance the cooperation of Air Wings, further facilitated by the F-35 programme, the CH-47F Chinook and the International Helicopter Training Centre (IHTC).

We cherish the close ties that exist at all levels, from the Defence Ministers' to working level, and encourage the numerous meetings in both structural and in ad hoc formats.

In particular, the "High Level Steering Group" (HLSG) format should be used as a coordinating mechanism providing advice and guidance to, and embracing initiatives from within, our Armed Forces.

The exchange of postings of both military and civilian personnel at all levels, as well as students and cadets at our military educational institutions, is extremely valuable and essential for our cooperation.

Conclusion

We remain firmly convinced that further enhancement of our close cooperation will contribute to a strong common response to shared challenges and threats. This will at the same time have a positive impact on both transatlantic and European security and defence. We strongly welcome additional partners to support and extend our bilaterally agreed direction for the enhancement of our excellent relations in the field of security and defence.

We declare our intention:

- to continue the mutually beneficial, professional and strong partnership in our common interest, and,
- to consult each other regularly, with the aim of defining common positions on any major decisions relevant to our security and defence interests and to coordinate and cooperate whenever possible.

[This Declaration of Intent will be made publicly available.](#)

Draft 4

Roadmap

Following this Declaration of Intent, an updated roadmap will provide concrete steps to enable our armed forces to deliver tangible results. This roadmap is a living, non-exhaustive document that will be regularly updated by and reported to the High Level Steering Group. The roadmap is not publicly available.

Signed in duplicate in xxx on xx xxxx 2023

Boris Pistorius
Federal Minister of Defence
of the Federal Republic of Germany

Kajsa Ollongren
Minister of Defence
of the Kingdom of the Netherlands