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## **Eurocorps as a pilot project for the European Defence Union**

Discussion Paper on the basis of a meeting of the Kangaroo Group with General Ramirez

The decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union makes it necessary to rethink the European Union from the beginning. We have to ask ourselves what the citizens really expect from the European Union. In the past seventy years the European Union has made a major contribution to the security and prosperity of the European nations.

The European Internal Market is a success story. We now have to build a European Internal Market without GB. Major adaptations will be necessary with an external customs border towards Great Britain and a European Financial Market of the 27 Member States.

The Euro has become second most important currency of the world. In the present turmoil it has shown a remarkable stability. However, on the long run Monetary Union will not be possible without a Political Union, since it cannot exist without a high degree of solidarity and security. Therefore, a Common Foreign and Security Policy is a centre piece of any Political Union.

The global strategy of Frederica Mogherini is an excellent analysis where we stand on the way towards a European Defence Union. It also contains useful proposals for the next steps to be taken. If we want to make a stronger contribution to our own security we need a permanent headquarter for planning and conducting European operations.

We also have to make sure that the soldiers who are sent into dangerous operations have adequate equipment, especially for situational awareness, navigation, telecommunication and transport.

We also have to analyse the differences in the social situation of soldiers who are engaged in the same missions.

On this path we need a strong symbol. The strongest possible symbol for a Common Security and Defence Policy is the Eurocorps in Strasbourg. We therefore propose to make the Eurocorps a pilot project for the future European Defence Union, while keeping its close connection with Nato.

In the past, Europe was often in the position to start new projects in a smaller group. It is therefore a fortunate coincidence that the Eurocorps is run by the framework nations France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Luxembourg and later on Poland. A very good combination of large, medium and small countries, which is well suited for a pilot initiative.

These countries should put the Eurocorps at the permanent disposal of the European Union. At the same time the capabilities of the Eurocorps should be improved in order to make sure that they can carry out successful operations in the geographical neighbourhood of the European Union.

The Eurocorps should become the preferred Headquarter for operations of the European Union. Its capabilities for situational awareness, navigation, protected telecommunications and transport should be strengthened. Pilot projects concerning these capabilities could be financed from the means available in the European Budget for Security and Defence Research.