

**Speech by Ambassador Hans-Dieter Lucas
at the MSC European Defence Summit evening reception
15 September 2015**

It is a great pleasure for me, as one of the co-hosts of this reception, to welcome you tonight to the opening of the European Defence Summit. I am doing this also on behalf of my colleague Reinhard Silberberg, the German Permanent Representative to the European Union. He very much regrets that he is not able to be with us tonight due to unforeseen obligations in connection with the refugee crisis. He asked me to convey his regards and best wishes for a successful conference.

Munich visits Brussels: The Munich Security Conference, the leading forum for an exchange on security policy issues, organizes a conference in the capital of European policymaking, bringing together key players and opinion leaders. This is more than appropriate. Brussels is more than ever the hub for European security policymaking, since it is the seat of both NATO and the EU.

The last years have reminded Europe in a dramatic way of the importance of security policy. The feeling of many Europeans that their continent is an island of security has turned out to be an illusion. Now Europeans know: Security cannot be taken for granted.

But nations alone cannot solve the challenges they are faced with today. Only by acting together can we master the threats. We must not forget this, although it may appear trivial. The refugee crisis is another striking example in this respect. That is why NATO and the EU are essential for our security.

Both institutions are complementary and should strengthen each other. However, the current state of affairs is not really satisfactory. We are underperforming when it comes to mobilizing synergies between NATO and the EU. Cooperation and coordination between these two organizations must be improved if we want to make best possible use of them. There appears to be no good alternative, if we look at the security threats we are facing. And there are quite a number of areas where NATO and the EU could work together. One example: joint work on how to react to the threat of hybrid warfare.

Europe is surrounded by an “arc of crisis”. Crisis is the “new normal”. That became clear already prior to the current refugee emergency. NATO and the EU have to adapt to this changed environment. For NATO, it was at the Wales Summit that the right decisions were taken, following the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, and against turmoil in the Middle East. At Wales, NATO leaders made substantial and far-reaching decisions, with a view to strengthening NATO’s deterrence through assurance and adaptation measures. Germany is making substantial contributions: as a lead nation in the VJTF, through its participation in Baltic Air Policing, and via other activities.

We are now in the run-up phase to the next NATO summit in Warsaw. And work on adapting NATO to new challenges continues. That is true concerning the crisis in the East – but also with regard to the arc of instability that stretches from Libya to Iraq. In response to these challenges, the Alliance must give convincing answers – as it has done for emerging challenges such as hybrid warfare or cyber.

To do that, and to act in unison, we need an open and thorough discussion on the key questions we are confronted with. For instance: How to devise a strategy which will both

strengthen NATO's deterrence and at the same time keep open channels of communication with Russia? NATO is delivering on the deterrence side, as I have already mentioned. However, talks in the Normandy format, as well as the E 3+3 negotiations with Iran, show that dialogue with Russia remains key for achieving progress on difficult issues. Syria is another topic for which, in the end, Russian cooperation will be important.

At the same time we need to have an open discussion on how to tackle security challenges in the South. Given the manifold and very diverse security threats in this region, there are no easy answers to the questions: What can NATO's role be? Where can it add value? This discussion has just gotten under way.

Certainly any action taken by the Alliance – for instance in the field of Defence Capacity Building, Border Security or Maritime Security – will have to be closely coordinated with other players, such as the UN and in particular the EU.

This brings me to the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy – the CSDP. CSDP is still an adolescent in comparison with NATO. But it is an adolescent who has grown tall and makes a strong impression: Examples range from more than a dozen current crisis management missions and operations to the European Defence Agency, from joint development and sharing of capabilities to enabling and enhancing defence capabilities of important partners, for instance in Africa. Crisis management by the EU, especially its operations at the Horn of Africa, also show that CSDP is a growth market.

This encouraging trajectory over the past decade raises expectations, internally on further integration, and externally those of partners such as the US or African countries, as well as those of Eastern Partner countries that are hoping for enhanced cooperation and support. The European Council in 2013 on Security and Defence was meant to ramp up these efforts, in order to make CSDP more effective and visible.

In this context, improving not only decision-making structures, but also resources and capabilities, remains crucial. At a time of budgetary constraints, we need to think of smart and creative ways to improve our defence capabilities, to get “more bang for the buck”. An example of this new thinking is Germany's initiative to establish a “Framework Nations Concept”. We have launched this initiative in NATO. But eventually it may also be relevant for the EU.

The idea is to further integrate European forces and capabilities and thus to achieve higher capability output. European nations create joint force formations through much closer cooperation among interested nations, thus closing capability gaps. The Framework Nations Concept was adopted at the Wales Summit. Implementation is well under way. Germany is working together with 15 European Allies in a framework nation grouping. We consider this to be an important contribution to the Warsaw Summit. By the way, improving European capabilities also contributes to more balanced burden-sharing with the US.

As you see, there are plenty of topics for an interesting and stimulating discussion at the European Defence Summit tomorrow. The meeting could not have taken place at a better point in time.

So let me thank Wolfgang Ischinger and the MSC for having organized this event here in Brussels – the city in which decisions on European and Euro-Atlantic defence are being prepared and shaped.

Thank you very much for your attention – I hope you enjoy tonight's reception in this wonderful setting and have many fruitful discussions tomorrow.