

His Excellency

Mr. Herman Van Rompuy,

President of the European Council

Brussels

Vilnius, 29th November 2013

Your Excellency, Mr. President,

We, the Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia welcome your initiative to discuss the state of European security and defence at the level of the European Council. We expect the December European Council to orientate the further development of the Common Security and Defence Policy and to give new impetus to EU cooperation. We look forward to a comprehensive debate on CSDP translated into European Council Conclusions, encompassing all three clusters of the 2012 mandate: effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP, capabilities and defence industry. We welcome the proposed agenda of the upcoming European Council building on the solid foundations of the report of the High Representative, the Communication of the Commission and the November Council Conclusions on CSDP.

Our domestic constituencies as well as our international partners expect more of the EU's involvement in global issues related to security and defence. Living up to these expectations requires clear strategic guidance at the highest political level. It is now the responsibility of the European Council to take action.

We expect the European Council to support increasing effectiveness, impact and visibility of CSDP through improving our ability to act timely using the complete array of EU civilian and military instruments in a flexible manner. We strongly believe that the European Council will reiterate its full commitment to the comprehensive civil-military level of ambition, as set out in respective EU documents. EU performance in planning and conducting CSDP missions and operations should be reviewed on a regular basis. We support the work on enhancing usability as well as flexibility of the EU Battlegroups. CSDP, as a principal crisis management tool, must be properly embedded in a set of different EU instruments available within the EU's Comprehensive Approach. A more effective CSDP means that we are better prepared to

address new security challenges such as those arising in cyberspace or in the field of energy security.

We support strengthening the development of European military capabilities through increased coordination and cooperation by developing and implementing operational programs identified by the EDA, i.a. Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), Air To Air Refuelling (AAR), Satellite Communication and Cyber Defence. We reiterate that strengthening of the European defence industry should go hand-in-hand with ensuring access and wider participation of small and medium size enterprises in the European defence market and setting of equal, transparent and fair conditions for all EU market players. Better use of the EU's structural funds in this regards should be ensured. Further efforts on strengthening the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) must be inclusive and balanced and recognize the need for sustainable development of the EDTIB, providing opportunities for all EU Member States.

While Member States have to make every effort to ensure that Europe does more on defence, we cannot, and do not wish to go alone. A strong and stable transatlantic partnership remains a shared vital interest and we have to concentrate on declaring and strengthening it amidst all global as well as internal developments. It is in this spirit that practical cooperation between the EU and NATO should be given a new impetus, including through increasing importance of using common standards for the planning and the development of capabilities.

We attach particular importance to intensifying security and defence dialogue between the EU and partner countries, including those from the EU's neighbourhood, and encouraging their wide participation in EU missions and operations. In this context we welcome the creation of the Panel on CSDP under the Eastern Partnership.

Last but not least we must firmly keep an eye on the further development of civilian dimension – the European Union's unique tool and potential. Successful specialized civilian missions substantially contribute to crisis prevention and post-conflict reconstruction. We must put sufficient emphasis on speeding up the launch of civilian missions once they are agreed on, providing them with adequate financing, flexibility, support and efficiency.

The European Council should not be a stand-alone event. A robust and regular follow-up process should be set in place in order to review progress and take additional steps. Therefore, we believe that European security and defence should become a regular discussion point of our meetings. Europe needs to recognize that defence and security do matter and adequate political attention and resources are needed to ensure the safety and security of our citizens.

Yours sincerely,



Viktor Orbán

Prime Minister of Hungary



Prime Minister of the Czech Republic



Donald Tusk

Prime Minister of Poland



Robert Fico

Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic