



Towards a (militarily) stronger and more self-reliant Europe

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***A brainstorm Paper on Potential Policy Steps (2022-2026)
for the Netherlands' Ministry of Defense***

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1. INTRODUCTION

The new Dutch government has set itself the ambitious goal of substantially contributing over the next four years to making the European Union (EU) a stronger international actor. One that is more independent, capable, and able to assert itself vis-à-vis other great powers on strategic matters.¹

For this to happen, the EU would have to finally muster the resources, capabilities, strategic vision, and political will to become a military actor in its own right. Following a decade of acrimoniously slow progress in the area of European defense cooperation, this sets the bar very high. Fortunately, a growing number of EU Member States have agreed to raise the ambition when it comes to the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). This has set the stage for a new push towards greater EU defense cooperation to boost the EU's strategic autonomy.

This growing sense of urgency has been captured by both European Commission President Ursula van der Leyen and President of the European Council Charles Michel, who have solemnly declared 2022 to be the “Year of European Defense”.² Indeed, 2022 will see a number of milestone developments regarding European defense. These include, but are not limited to, the upcoming endorsement of the EU Strategic Compass, a new NATO Strategic Concept, the third EU-NATO Declaration, and the launch of a new EU-US dialogue on security and defense.

These developments provide a significant opportunity for the Netherlands to play a leading role in contributing to and shaping the EU's emerging defense agenda. And to do so while maintaining its long-held views with regards to pragmatic EU defense arrangements, close trans-Atlantic coordination and embeddedness in NATO. It also provides an occasion to take forward the ambitions set out in the Netherlands' Defense Vision 2035.³ A new Defense White Paper constitutes a first major opportunity for the government to institutionalize concrete plans towards this vision.

Particularly since Brexit, the Netherlands has become a more prominent and at times agenda-setting EU Member State. Having established close relations with both Germany and France, as well as with NATO-partners Britain and the US, the Netherlands is well positioned to take a more daring and leading role in pushing for a (militarily) stronger, more self-reliant Europe, while strengthening NATO at the same time. In that context, the new Dutch government ought to capitalize on the current drive for stronger European defense arrangements by contributing to, and where possible leading, EU efforts towards greater strategic autonomy.

This brainstorm paper, prepared for the Head Policy Department of the Dutch Ministry of Defense, intends to frame and stir up a discussion around concrete potential policy objectives and steps the new Dutch government could take in the coming four years (2022-2026). Given the limited scope, the focus remains on the EU and not on “Europe” in the broader sense. For this purpose, it provides a concise, forward-looking, wider context for EU defense initiatives in the years to come and a number of potential priority focus areas, policy objectives and steps that can be taken to shape institutions, develop capabilities, and put in place some necessary (pre)conditions for change.

¹ See “[Coalitieakkoord 'Omzien naar elkaar, vooruitkijken naar de toekomst'](#)”, 15 December 2021.

² See for example, David M. Herszenhorn “[Charles Michel declares 2022 'year of European defense'](#)”, Politico.eu, 2 October 2021.

³ “[Defense Vision 2035: Fighting for a secure future](#)”, 15 October 2020.

2. THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE CONTEXT 2022-2026

All Dutch efforts to contribute to a more capable, more coordinated, and more self-reliant European defense during the period 2022-2026 will inevitably be shaped by and ought to build on the wider context for European defense over that period. This context is informed by developments in four distinct, but intertwined, policy arenas with their own dynamics, agendas, and decision-making structures, in which the Netherlands participates to varying degrees:

- **EU Institutional Agenda:** The EU institutional agenda will be driven by a number of pre-set policy agendas and processes during this period. These include the French EU Presidency in the first half of 2022, with its (over)ambitious policy goals for the future of European defense, as well as the anticipated adoption of the EU Strategic Compass in March 2022 and proposals around a EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) leading to 2025. The current phase of PESCO, with 60 defense projects, is also set to be concluded by 2025, while the first budget period of the European Defense Fund (EDF) will conclude in 2027, requiring an agreement on its replenishment. On the political level, elections for the next European Parliament and the appointment of the next European Commission are due in 2024.
- **EU Member States' Agendas:** Political developments in key EU Member States will provide further impulses for the European defense agenda. The new German “traffic light” government has yet to find its feet on defense, but has committed itself to more EU integration and a more pro-active foreign policy. France will go to the polls twice in 2022, and Italy and Poland will vote in 2023 – all have the potential to delay, derail, or accelerate some European defense efforts. National defense procurement priorities and common armaments projects, such as the French-German-Spanish Future Combat Air System (FCAS), will be key factors driving national defense policy agendas with wide ranging consequences for the future independence of Europe’s defense industrial base.
- **NATO Agenda:** Developments within NATO and between NATO and the EU will provide another important context for Dutch initiatives and efforts. This year (2022) will see a number of significant agenda items, including the newly launched US-EU dialogue on security and defense, discussions on a third Joint EU-NATO Declaration, and NATO’s revised Strategic Concept to be adopted in June 2022. On an operational level, preparations for the Dutch participation in NATO’s Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) in 2023 will partly dictate resource allocation. Beyond this, the commitment of NATO Member States to spend 2% of GDP on defense by 2024 looms large on the agenda, as does the potential of an (unpredictable) change in US leadership the same year.
- **Multilateral Agenda:** Apart from the well-known changing geopolitical dynamics (which have been exhaustively covered elsewhere), the wider European defense context will be informed by a number of important developments on the multilateral agenda. These include US-Russian discussions on a replacement for the New START nuclear arms reduction treaty (set to expire in 2026), the 2022 NPT Review Conference, the (re)negotiations of a JCPOA with Iran, as well as ongoing discussions on global cybersecurity norms and the military use of outer space. While not a focus of this paper, these issues provide important context for European security throughout 2022-2026.

2.1. EU INSTITUTIONAL AGENDA

EU STRATEGIC COMPASS



Due to be adopted in March 2022, according to an initial draft, at its core will be a Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5,000 troops, made up of land, sea, and air components and deployable by 2025. Joint scenarios are to be developed by 2023 and an EU headquarters is to run all EU training missions, as well as smaller missions by 2025. Among many other things, the Compass also puts forward ambitious plans to build a cyber deterrence for Europe.

PESCO



Since its introduction in 2017, PESCO offers participating Member States (pMS) a binding framework to jointly plan, develop and invest in shared capabilities. For 2021-2025, the 25 pMS have agreed on 60 projects (fourth wave), with the aim of establishing their full operational capability by 2025. The Netherlands participates in 13 PESCO projects, coordinating one (Military Mobility). A PESCO Strategic Review is planned for 2024 to discuss next steps.

EUROPEAN DEFENSE FUND



The launch of the EDF in 2021 marked a new level of European ambitions in reducing duplication and inefficiencies in European defense spending. With close to €8bn in funding for 2021-2027, the EDF is the third largest public source of funding for defense research in Europe. Annual work programs will lead to calls for proposals which require the participants to come from multiple EU Member States. Impact and next steps will have to be evaluated.

EU MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS



The EU remains engaged in a broad set of overseas operations, including currently 7 military and 11 civilian missions, with some 5,000 personnel deployed. There are plans to consolidate the nascent command and control (C2) facilities of the EU to tackle more high-end tasks. With the launch of the European Peace Facility (EPF) in 2021, EU operations have gained a new and potent funding instrument. The Netherlands contributed a total of 85 personnel to EU operation in 2020.

EU CIVILIAN COMPACT



The 2018 EU Civilian Compact includes commitments to enhancing contributions to civilian CSDP, encouraging faster decision-making for civilian missions, and increasing the share of civilians in CSDP missions. The framework states that the EU should be “able to launch a new mission of up to 200 personnel in any area of operation within 30 days.” The Civilian Compact is set for delivery by 2023. Discussions have started on a Civilian Compact 2.0 and its relation to the EU Strategic Compass.

COORDINATED MARITIME PRESENCE



A CMP pilot currently runs in the Gulf of Guinea and will be evaluated in early 2022. Discussions are ongoing about the potential extension of the concept to the Indian Ocean by 2023. Given the participation of the Netherlands in EMASOH and engagements in the Indian Ocean, this remains a relevant debate, but not all EU Member States agree on expanding the CMP globally, with some preferring a focus on the EU’s neighborhood.

2.2. EU MEMBER STATES' AGENDAS

In addition to the EU's evolving institutional agenda, Dutch efforts to foster a stronger and more self-reliant Europe in the area of security and defense will have to be closely aligned with the priorities of other key EU Member States – in particular Germany and France. Both will remain central in moving the EU defense agenda forward, if to varying degrees and following different priorities, while other EU countries like Italy, Spain, Poland and also the Nordics and Baltics will contribute their own views.

GERMANY

Germany's new traffic light coalition has pledged to conduct a more forward-leaning and value-driven foreign policy with a strong focus on fostering further European integration, including in the area of security and defense. While many questions remain over the vision of the new German government when it comes to defense matters, a number of relevant issues have emerged:

- **Defense Spending:** Questioning NATO's 2% of GDP spending target, the German government has pledged to raise its "overall spending on international affairs" to 3% of GDP, including German spending on defense, development, and diplomacy (currently Germany spends around 2.5% in total). While the concrete impact on Germany's defense budget remains unclear, the government has indicated that it will continue to moderately increase defense spending over the next four years from the current level of 1.56% of GDP.
- **Spending Priorities:** The coalition agreement outlined a number of procurement priorities, including a replacement for Germany's aging Tornado fighter planes, arming German drones, boosting cyber defense capabilities, and ensuring material readiness and equipment of the German forces. There will also be a focus on fostering defense technological cooperation in Europe through joint projects. However, Germany remains skeptical about its current cooperation with France on FCAS and the new government has indicated its willingness to look at new ways by evaluating a possible purchase of the F-35.
- **National Security Strategy:** To foster cohesion in foreign action and provide greater strategic direction, the government aims to adopt a National Security Strategy for the first time ever in 2022. It also pledges to closely coordinate foreign policy with key partners.
- **Going Global:** German foreign and defense policy also seeks to be more globally oriented, a process that started during the previous government with the issuing of the so-called Indo-Pacific Guidelines that aim to further boost Germany's presence in that region. After deploying a frigate to the Indo-Pacific for the first time in almost 20 years in 2021, the German navy announced its intention to conduct deployments in the region every two years and will participate in the multinational Pitch Black exercise in fall 2022. Germany has also upgraded defense cooperation and exchanges with Australia and Japan.
- **Going into Space:** In 2021, Germany joined a number of countries in setting up a designated Space Command. The new command will oversee operations that include military reconnaissance, the monitoring and protection of satellites, and the tracking of dangerous space debris and is expected to grow over time.

- **Arms Exports:** The new government has pledged to significantly step up its efforts when it comes to international arms control and non-proliferation efforts, a long-standing priority for the German Greens. In addition, the government seeks to promote a binding new EU arms export law that emphasizes human rights and that is sure to raise some conflict with France, Italy and others that maintain an export-oriented defense industry.
- **Civilian Crisis Management:** Finally, civilian crisis management, peace mediation, and crisis foresight have been identified as other focus areas, in which Germany is also likely to seek greater leadership on the European stage and could be willing to launch new initiatives.

FRANCE

Under President Emmanuel Macron, France has defined an ambitious agenda for European defense cooperation, which is reflected in the vast and somewhat bold plans of the French EU Presidency. With French Presidential elections scheduled for April 2022 and Parliamentary elections to follow in mid-June, it remains to be seen whether there will be any upcoming changes to the current French plans – and whether France itself will commit to more European integration.

- **Research and Innovation:** Strengthening Europe's defense industrial capacity is a strong priority for the French Presidency which seeks to further boost the European Defense Agency (EDA) and upgrade existing PESCO projects. FCAS remains a central building block from a French perspective, but Germany and Spain have voiced concern that the project will primarily benefit France's Dassault and relies on outdated technology.
- **Defense Industrial Capacities:** Stung by the AUKUS snub, France has started an aggressive sales offensive to strengthen French defense industrial capacities – the latest evidence of which is the surprise sale of 80 Rafale fighter aircraft to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This puts France at odds with the more restrictive arms export policies favored by Germany and others that could complicate further defense industrial integration and joint production. France's reliance on foreign sales to sustain a modern arms industry also represents fundamental challenges to a more integrated EU foreign and defense policy.
- **Crisis Management Capabilities:** France is pushing for a greater consolidation of the EU's Command and Control (C2) capabilities, enhanced readiness and interoperability of European forces, and the ability of the EU to carry out initial entry operations. To this end, it wants to enlarge the EU Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) and provide it with more permanent staffing. The MPCC's scope is to be expanded, where the EU wants to set itself the goal of running from its military Headquarters not just all EU training missions, but also smaller missions and exercises by 2025 and all its missions by 2030.
- **Enhanced European Presence:** France continues to push for a more robust EU presence in its near abroad where it competes with other powers. Here France retains a clear focus on crisis operations in the EU's (southern) neighborhood and Sub-Saharan Africa, complementing or replacing pre-existing French crisis management and political efforts. Amongst others, Macron envisages a security partnership with Africa, a push against foreign interference in the Balkans, as well as an EU presence in the Indo-Pacific.

- **New Domains:** France is also pushing for the EU to take a greater security role in new domains, in particular the space domain and in the area of ‘information warfare’ and ‘strategic communications’. France is investing in technologies and capacities in the space and cyber domain as well as the information environment. Amongst others France is pushing for the adoption of a strategy to address risks and incidents in the space domain and threats to the (new) EU space program by late 2023. In 2021, France launched its first operational constellation of communications and electronic intelligence satellites, indicating an increasing interest in the military use of space.
- **High intensity warfare:** France’s armed forces are preparing for the possibility of high-intensity conflict and are undergoing what some French generals have called the “largest transformation since World War 2”.⁴ These efforts aim not only at significantly increasing the armed forces’ readiness for this kind of warfare, but will also see France hold high intensity exercises, such as Orion 2023 with Belgium, the US and possibly the UK. However, for the transformation to succeed, mass and endurance need to be improved.⁵

OTHER MEMBER STATES’ PRIORITIES

Apart from France and Germany, other European countries will of course continue to pursue their own priorities with regards to EU defense cooperation. Here a small but significant selection:

- **Quirinale Treaty:** The signing of the 2021 Quirinale Treaty between France and Italy has opened a new chapter of cooperation between the two countries, including in the area of security and defense. This may foster greater defense industrial cooperation and closer alignment on foreign policy and defense matters. It also could strengthen France’s hand vis-à-vis a more reluctant Germany when it comes to issues such as the use of hard power, arms exports, or common funding for EU operations. Italy’s participation in the TEMPEST FCAS together with the UK and Sweden nonetheless complicates potential cooperation.
- **Eastern Europe:** Poland has gradually transformed itself into a weighty defense actor, maintaining a steady increase in defense spending (above 2% of GDP) and more recently signing a deal for the acquisition of 32 F-35s. As long as the PiS retains control, Poland will remain a reluctant player in European defense cooperation, apart from its interest in some defense industrial cooperation and EU funding. The Polish elections scheduled for autumn 2023 could change this. Other Eastern European countries, such as Hungary, will continue to follow Poland’s lead and more often than not provide an obstacle to a larger EU role and skepticism towards Franco-German leadership.
- **Baltics and the Nordics:** The Baltic and Nordic states have in the past shared some of the skepticism of their Eastern European neighbors – with Denmark most notably retaining an opt-out with regards to European defense. However, there has been a growing recognition of the role that Europe can play in this area of late, with countries such as Finland and Estonia favoring greater efforts when it comes to hybrid threats and cybersecurity, amongst others.

⁴ [“The French armed forces are planning for high intensity war”](#), *The Economist*, March 2021.

⁵ [“France wants to transform its ‘beautiful army’ for intensity warfare”](#), *Breaking Defense*, 16 December 2021.

3. THE NETHERLANDS: SUGGESTED PRIORITIES AND POLICY STEPS

Dutch EU defense policy tends to be guided by a number of general reflexes and mantras which will undoubtedly remain important parameters for Dutch objective-setting in this area in the coming four years. These include:

<p>Improving existing structures before inventing new ones.</p>	 <p>This includes utilizing the EU Battlegroups to build a Rapid Deployment Capacity and unlocking remaining possibilities offered by the EU Treaties, such as unpacking Article 42 (7) TEU, Article 44 TEU, Article 222 TFEU.</p>
<p>A stronger Europe = A stronger NATO.</p>	 <p>As a historically more pro-Atlanticist country, the Netherlands is unwilling to compromise NATO-relations to advance EU defense cooperation. A division of labor between collective defense and crisis management is, for now, the preferred path.</p>
<p>Unanimity when possible, flexibility when needed.</p>	 <p>EU structures and initiatives should remain open to possible contributions and participation from non-EU partners, while the Netherlands is also fine with booking progress through ad hoc coalitions, such as the European Intervention Initiative (EI2).</p>
<p>Balancing and bridging between Germany, France and the UK.</p>	 <p>While the focus has long been on following German and British leads, alignment with French initiatives has grown. Despite a troubled Brexit, the Dutch prefer to keep the United Kingdom as closely involved in defense matters as possible.</p>
<p>A strong EU defense industry that protects smaller companies.</p>	 <p>The Dutch see the value of scaling strategic industries and capability development within Europe and building a strong European defense market. However, it wants to keep a place for its own SMEs and is currently still quite focused on the US market.</p>

SUGGESTED NL PRIORITY AREAS TO CONTRIBUTE TO A (MILITARY) STRONGER EU

The thinking and drafting processes around the Defense Vision 2035, the EU Strategic Compass and (probably) NATO's new Strategic Concept have already resulted in a much clearer articulation of priorities and positioning of the Dutch defense organization. In this brainstorm paper, we list five potential priority areas that seem appropriate for the Netherlands to profile itself more on at the European level, either as a highly constructive supporter or a committed agenda-setter:

- **Pioneering in Cyber Deterrence, Cyber Enablers and Digital Interoperability (See 3.1.)**
- **Ensuring a Successful EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) (See 3.2.)**
- **Putting (Coordinated) Specialization Successfully Back on the Agenda (See 3.3)**
- **Building Concrete Tools for Preventing Conflict and Managing Destabilization (See 3.4.)**
- **Stimulating EU-Transatlantic Cooperation (See 3.5.)**

Per potential priority area, we suggest policy objectives and steps that can be taken to shape institutions, develop capabilities and put in place some necessary (pre)conditions for change.

OVERVIEW OF SUGGESTED NL POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR THE 5 LISTED PRIORITY AREAS

	CYBER	RAPID	SPECIAL	PREVENT	T-ATLANTIC
SHAPE INSTITUTIONS	Take a leading role in developing EU cybersecurity policies and strategy, with a focus on building EU deterrence and response capacities against large-scale cyber attacks.	Be fully integrated in an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity and play an active role in its success, including by putting in place adequate decision-making processes.	Build on trusted defense cooperation relationships and push institutionalized cooperation, integration and where possible specialization to a next level, including in new domains.	Promote a larger role for the EU institutions and programming focused on conflict anticipation, prevention and countering destabilization; further develop understanding of the potential role of the military in pre-escalation conflict stages.	Establish a clear and convincing vision on the complementarity of the EU and NATO in defense matters and reflect this in national planning and procurement processes, training and strategies.
DEVELOP CAPABILITIES	Contribute significantly to developing cyber enablers and capabilities for credible deterrence, including those leading to technical, political, and possibly legal attribution.	Solve the shortages in combat and combat (service) support and optimize the readiness of multidomain units for the own participating share in the Rapid Deployment Capacity.	Use existing EU-wide capability reviews and tools such as CARD and PESCO to encourage bottom-up and coordinated specialization between different (clusters) of countries based on identified capability shortfalls and priorities.	Invest in the necessary human capital for conflict anticipation and prevention, as well as in the ability to use and develop “new” technologies and applications, including remote sensing, satellite imagery and drone technologies.	Address priority capability shortfalls for both organizations in a coordinate manner and encourage joint efforts in areas where duplication is purely wasting resources.
CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS	Setting up structures to (jointly) train cyber talent and push for ethical-legal frameworks that are enabling a stronger Europe in the cyber domain but remain in line with EU principles.	Engage closely with France and Germany on the RDC on a bilateral level in order to be able to be involved early on and play a bridge function between key players.	Establish a new appealing narrative on defense-related specialization, promoting acceptable concepts and proposals in order to overcome the current negative connotations.	Raise the level of urgency for conflict prevention and countering destabilization, both at the EU and the national level and both within the government as well as with the broader public (including parliament).	Invest efforts in making EU-NATO cooperation a win-win situation and try to win over traditionally more Atlanticist countries that remain skeptical to EU defense issues.

3.1. PIONEERING IN CYBER DETERRENCE, CYBER ENABLERS AND DIGITAL INTEROPERABILITY

What needs to happen for a stronger, more self-reliant EU?

- ❖ Pooling of resources and structures allowing for better coordination between national entities, as for example is intended with the proposed 2022 EU Joint Cyber Unit.
- ❖ Collectively close cyber capability gaps, from enablers (force protection systems, ISR technologies) to defensive and offensive cyber capabilities.⁵
- ❖ Ensure digital interoperability between Member States, as countries are modernizing forces at different speeds and utilizing different systems.
- ❖ Train and maintain an adequate pool of cyber talents that are not only top-notch experts, but also able to work in multinational settings.
- ❖ A shared strategic approach to cyber issues, including a focus on cross-domain deterrence and responses and an adequate legal environment that can make EU member states stand up to potential adversaries.

Why a focus area for the Netherlands?

- ❖ The Netherlands has been taking an international leading role in cyber diplomacy, the development of cyber capabilities and intelligence leading to attribution of state-led attacks.
- ❖ The Netherlands hosts vital national and international digital infrastructure, the safeguarding of which requires protection and deterrence, including in coordination with EU partners.
- ❖ The new Coalition Agreement seeks to position the Netherlands as a pioneer in digital and cyberspace; the Defense Vision 2035 mentions cyber space as a possible domain for Dutch military specialization.

SUGGESTED NL POLICY OBJECTIVES 2022-2026

CYBER 1 | SHAPE INSTITUTIONS

Take a leading role in developing EU cybersecurity policies and strategy, with a focus on building EU deterrence and response capacities against large-scale cyber attacks.

CYBER 2 | DEVELOP CAPABILITIES

Contribute significantly to developing cyber enablers and capabilities for credible deterrence, including those leading to technical, political, and possibly legal attribution.

CYBER 3 | CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS

Setting up structures to (jointly) train cyber talent and push for ethical-legal frameworks that are enabling a stronger Europe in the cyber domain, in line with EU principles.

PIONEERING IN CYBER DETERRENCE, CYBER ENABLERS AND DIGITAL INTEROPERABILITY
POTENTIAL STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN BY MINISTRY OF DEFENSE/NETHERLANDS 2022-2026

	WHAT?	HOW?
SHAPE INSTITUTIONS	Actively input in the potential set up of an EU Joint Cyber Unit, ensuring deterrence of large-scale cyber incidents by state-actors or their proxies and minimizing overlap with other entities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As NL (NCTV, Def, others) actively input in ENISA workshops (Q1-2, 2022). Put forward ideas and build coalitions to define what, based on the stated objectives⁶, the role/added value of such a unit should be. If the opportunity arises, put fwd candidates for leading roles in the JCU in order to further influence its development.
	Increase weight in relevant EU-level organizations, platforms and working groups, potentially inputting a more “military” perspective into Network and Information Security Directive (NIS2), Cyber Resilience Act.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be well-presented and coordinated in relevant EU-level working groups, including the Horizontal Working Group on Cyber Issues, DG DEFIS and ENISA (also new Brussels Office). Strong exchanges between NL representatives across institutions on upcoming legislation, just as with cyber experts outside of government.
	Strengthen the thought leadership position of the Netherlands in (military and civil-military) cyber-related strategic and policy issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund positions for Dutch cyber experts in leading int’l research institutions shaping discussions around cyber defense and deterrence (e.g. EU CoE for Countering Hybrid Threats, the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense CoE, IISS’ Cyber, Space and Future Conflict unit, ECFR, Carnegie Europe).
	Enhance foresight capacity in the area of cyber defense; map consequences and future tasks for the defense organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with relevant organizations, e.g. taking lessons from foresight exercises done by ENISA⁷ and integrate growing cyber threats and possibilities better in EWEA activities at the national and European levels.

⁶ A) coordinated EU reaction to large-scale cyber threats, incidents and crises; B) enhancing the situational awareness and C) improving communal readiness.

⁷ “[Foresight Challenges: a study to enable foresight on Emerging and Future Cybersecurity Challenges](#)”, ENISA, November 2021; and also see Daniel Fiott, “[Digitalising Defence: Protecting Europe in the age of quantum computing and the cloud](#)”, EUISS, March 2020.

	WHAT?	HOW?
DEVELOP CAPABILITIES	<p>Push for cyber capabilities to be part of a cross-domain deterrence that plays into EU strengths.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate the blending of instruments to prevent or respond to cyber incidents (financial, legal, diplomatic, other). Test such approaches for example in scenarios drafted as part of the preparations for a Rapid Deployment Capacity or in cyber-attack response exercises.
	<p>Push for strengthening the digital component of military mobility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Push for a step towards Enhanced Military Mobility, e.g. with proposals on “digital” military mobility focused on resilience of IT-systems and processes of the physical means of transportation and logistics facilities.
	<p>Push for increased digital interoperability, data and knowledge sharing with an eye for trust and confidence-building in this field.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Push for the creation of a common defense data space, in line with those for other sectors as part of the European Strategy for Data.⁸ Initiate small-scale projects with trusted partners, for example shared storing of unclassified data used for EU-wide remote cyber exercises. Advocate a common EU military cloud and a feasibility study in this area.
	<p>Offer capacity building efforts to other EU Member States to raise overall digital interoperability and cyber security standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share lessons from NL-GER cooperation (FOXTROT/TEN) as part of wider digital interoperability and cyber capacity building in other MS. Raise standards by proposing peer-review aimed at mutual learning and improvement (as part of existing reviews, e.g. within PESCO or CARD).
	<p>Strengthen the international position of the Dutch (dual-use) cyber security capabilities industry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulate the Dutch cyber security capabilities industry, nationally and internationally; encourage greater engagement of Dutch SMEs. Push the EU (DG DEFIS), to invest in businesses in the emerging space and digital economy offering promising cyber deterrence products/services.

⁸ See for example “[Commission welcomes political agreement to boost data sharing and support European data spaces](#)”, European Commission, 1 December 2021; also see “[A European Strategy for Data](#)”, The European Commission.

	WHAT?	HOW?
CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS	Take up an (in)formal role as “CARD capability cluster lead” ⁹ on cyber defense and cyber deterrence capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start a bottom-up process to close capability gaps as identified in CARD (in this case: cyber enablers, defensive and offensive cyber capabilities); find partners to tackle (future) shortfalls in a structured and targeted manner.
	Scale cyber training efforts at the European level and promote links to business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the setting up of an elite EU cyber school to promote the development of a European strategic culture on cybersecurity issues. A “master class” education could focus on coding skills, the development of cyber capabilities, cyber strategy and norms, detection and attribution. Consider co-sponsoring more high-level hackathons and cyber incubator arrangements to raise the profile of cyber defense careers.
	Integrate cyber defense training better into multidomain exercises and certification processes of force units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Better) integrate cyber talents and cyber defense training into EU Battlegroup processes and (later) in the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity. Organize exercises such as ISIDOOR at a more international level.
	Raise high-level and public awareness and understanding of cyber threats and dilemmas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make state-level cyber threats visible and urgent through popular (social) media channels to raise public awareness. At the EU level, signal joint commitment through a Cyber Defense Pledge and Conference, similar to or linked to the NATO Pledge in this field.
	Play a proactive role in developing the necessary ethical-juridical frameworks, including around cyber arms controls, rules of engagement, dual use export control regimes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work together with Germany in promoting a common framework on the ethical use of cybersecurity and dual-use technology with the aim of developing common EU standards. Explore in this context common German-Dutch initiatives to strengthen EU export controls with regards to cybersecurity and dual-use technology.

⁹ See EDA, EEAS, “[2020 CARD Report](#)”.

3.2. ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL EU RAPID DEPLOYMENT CAPACITY (RDC)

What needs to happen for a stronger, more self-reliant EU?

- ❖ The flagship proposal of the upcoming EU Strategic Compass is the operationalization of a joint (multidomain) Rapid Deployment Capacity by 2025, able to protect EU interests in the near abroad.
- ❖ The EU needs to be able to stage the right set of capabilities for such a rapid deployment force as well as the right levels of technical (and cultural) interoperability.
- ❖ In addition and given the experience with the EU battlegroups, faster decision-making processes for deployment are needed at EU and national levels, without losing the necessary (parliamentary) checks and balances.

Why a focus area for the Netherlands?

- ❖ As the flagship project for the next years, this should be an area of focus of all member states. France and Germany will dominate, but the Netherlands should be able to influence thinking at an early stage.
- ❖ The Netherlands is a staunch advocate of aligning EU and NATO initiatives and building up the RDC is a prime example of where such alignment is desirable.
- ❖ Given its vision of transforming its own armed forces into flexible, scalable, self-supporting multidomain units, the Netherlands should leverage the dynamic at the European level to push for adjustments in the own defense organization.

SUGGESTED NL POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR 2022- 2026

RAPID 1 | SHAPE INSTITUTIONS

Be fully integrated in an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity and play an active role in its success, including by putting in place adequate decision-making processes.

RAPID 2 | DEVELOP CAPABILITIES

Solve the shortages in combat and combat (service) support and optimize the readiness of multidomain units for the own participating share in the Rapid Deployment Capacity.

RAPID 3 | CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS

Engage closely with France and Germany on the RDC on a bilateral level in order to be able to be involved early on and play a bridge function between key players.

ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL EU RAPID DEPLOYMENT CAPACITY
POTENTIAL STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN BY MINISTRY OF DEFENSE/NETHERLANDS 2022-2026

	WHAT?	HOW?
SHAPE INSTITUTIONS	Prepare the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC)¹⁰ for growing responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push for enlarging the MPCC and complete (permanent) staffing requirements, where NL could seek influential roles as MPCC’s role expands. • Proactive input in strategic discussions and annual MPCC conference, e.g. push for MPCC’s systems for the exchange of classified information.
	With like-minded partners, take the initiative for a transformation proposal from EU Battle Groups to ‘Rapid Deployment Capacity’.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Netherlands could take the lead, together with likeminded partners, in drafting a transformation plan from EU Battlegroups to EU RDC, including an assessment of current gaps, challenges and solutions.
	Play an active role in developing some of the Strategic Operational Cases (SOCs) for the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Netherlands could “volunteer” for a leading role in developing SOCs for high-end SOF operations, cyber deterrence, civil-military conflict prevention, HADR operations with maritime components.
	Accelerate decision making at the EU level by making better use of the opportunities generated by Article 44 TEU.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of Article 44 TEU to allow the delegation of operational planning and force generation of EU operations to a smaller group, connected to the use of constructive abstention and non-contribution to common costs.
	Together with parliament, explore ways to accelerate decision making for rapid deployments, thereby not eroding any indispensable parliamentary scrutiny.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare proposals for the Standing Committees on Defense of both Houses of Parliament on the acceleration or phasing of decision-making (e.g. on the principle of deployment in a certain situation, on the actual proposal for type of mission, time commitment, etc.)

¹⁰ The MPCC is responsible for the operational planning and conduct of the EU’s nonexecutive military missions and since November 2018, the MPCC has the additional responsibility to plan and conduct one executive military operation of the size of an EU Battlegroup. See also Brooks Tigner, “[EU’s operational headquarters looks set, finally, to declare FOC by end of 2021](#)”, *Janes*, 14 July 2021.

	WHAT?	HOW?
DEVELOP CAPABILITIES	Solve national ‘combat (service) support’ shortages initially based on filling gaps at the EU level, starting with the needs for an RDC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link the mapping of national shortages to what is needed at the EU level to ensure the readiness of the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity. • Be guided by the shortages in combat (service) support and areas of cooperation identified as part of the CARD review.
	Propose, either as stand-alone country, or together with like-minded Member States, a significantly large multidomain force building-block to the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within this multinational, multidomain structure, ensure the necessary training and exercises, increase the readiness and deployability and lower the reaction times as deemed necessary. • For the Netherlands, Germany would be a natural partner for such a proposal, though one could also explore how far one would get with building its own multidomain units – a development also foreseen in the Defense Vision 2035.
	Use the setup of a more multidomain RDC at the EU level to push for further institutionalization of multidomain thinking and doing in the own defense organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design military training (basic and specialized) that is less siloed and creates a much more multidomain profile for the armed forces, in which cyber and space are also fully integrated domains. • Start merging parts of military trainings with EU partners, in order to add further interoperability challenges (material, software, and personnel) and an element of trust building not only beyond national service branches, but also beyond national borders.
	Propose a pool of “European” reserve officers to scale missions and operations quickly at the EU level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider establishing a European “gap reserve officer year”, open to European citizens, which creates a large pool of reserve officers and which at the same time increases the overall societal resilience (a military type of “Erasmus” program).

	WHAT?	HOW?
CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS	<p>Improve the necessary willingness for organizational change and nurture a more multidomain and EU-minded military (without becoming less NATO-minded).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote military training that is more multidomain, more international and less rigid from the start, where European and American perspectives are of equal importance. This might mean a slight change in focus in recruitment of faculty and trainers, in curriculum and training models, as well as a broader net of partner academies. • Commit to and actively participate in EU military exercises and exchanges.
	<p>Improve information and influencing position in relevant European capitals through more secondments and intra-government human resource exchanges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More secondments within other European MoDs, including of civilian policy staff (in particular to Germany, France, Italy, Poland). • Keep a close and active network of NL representatives in the relevant EU institutions, relevant capitals and NATO, as well as relevant academics, in order to strengthen a coherent Dutch position.
	<p>Improve the use of strong and continuous external monitoring and analysis of defense debates taking place within the military and policy circles in the relevant EU capitals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make better use of strong and continuous external monitoring and analysis services (intern or extern) of defense debates taking place within the military and policy circles in the relevant EU capitals, Berlin and Paris to start with, but ideally also including Rome and Warsaw. • Make more regular strategic analyses of what the Netherlands (starting with interdepartmental before going departmental, wants to achieve on larger “security” files at the EU level. • This could be coordinated by a government-wide “Scientific Bureau for Security and Defense” or by a strategic analysis unit as part of a National Security Council.

3.3. PUTTING (COORDINATED) SPECIALIZATION SUCCESSFULLY BACK ON THE AGENDA

What needs to happen for a stronger, more self-reliant EU?

- ❖ Initiate tailored forms of specialization in response to scarce resources, new domains including space and cyber, more complex risks, threats of a higher magnitude and growing EU ambitions.
- ❖ Mitigate the risk of having armed forces that can do everything a little bit, but nothing well enough. Plus the risk that uneven, uncoordinated modernization increases issues around (technical) interoperability.
- ❖ Find a mechanism, which could be specialization, to fill significant (future) capability gaps in new domains and new areas of warfare as soon and smoothly as possible.
- ❖ New discussions around various, constructive forms of coordinated specialization need to be decoupled from older, negative discussions linking specialization with large and destructive spending cuts.

Why a focus area for the Netherlands?

- ❖ The Netherlands has understood that the concept of defense specialization deserves a second chance, as voiced in the Defense Vision 2035 and elsewhere.
- ❖ If the Dutch defense organization wants to have a more pronounced profile, it will need to excel in some areas.
- ❖ Avenues are slowly opening to push the specialization agenda forward, and the Netherlands can jump on these opportunities in multilateral as well as bilateral settings.

SUGGESTED NL POLICY OBJECTIVES 2022-2026

SPECIAL 1 | SHAPE INSTITUTIONS

Build on trusted bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation relationships and push institutionalized cooperation, integration and where possible specialization to a next level, including in new domains.

SPECIAL 2 | DEVELOP CAPABILITIES

Use existing EU-wide capability reviews and tools such as CARD and PESCO to encourage bottom-up and coordinated specialization between different (clusters) of countries based on identified capability shortfalls and priorities.

SPECIAL 3 | CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS

Establish a new appealing narrative on defense-related specialization, promoting acceptable concepts and proposals in order to overcome the current negative connotations.

PUTTING (COORDINATED) SPECIALIZATION SUCCESSFULLY BACK ON THE AGENDA
POTENTIAL STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN BY MINISTRY OF DEFENSE/NETHERLANDS 2022-2026

	WHAT?	HOW?
SHAPE INSTITUTIONS	Encourage (new/ad hoc/implicit) forms of specialization during the implementation phase of the EU Strategic Compass and its flagship proposals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for implicit specialization , e.g. as (clusters of) countries lead in Strategic Operational Cases (SOCs) they feel strategically comfortable with. • The Netherlands could “volunteer” a leading role in designing and developing SOC for high-end SOF operations, cyber deterrence, civil-military conflict prevention, HADR operations with maritime components.
	Build on the bilateral defense cooperation relationship with Belgium and push cooperation, integration and where possible specialization to a next level (e.g. air domain).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the expansion of the Dutch naval cooperation with Belgium into other domains, e.g. the air domain now that both countries will fly the F35; elements of specialization could again be sought in platform support and maintenance (and possibly sharing data collected by its sensors).
	Build on the bilateral defense cooperation relationship with Germany and push cooperation, integration and where possible specialization to a next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore further integration of units with Germany’s armed forces, in all domains. Use joint deployments and experiences (Battlegroup, VJTF) to deduct lessons on interoperability (material, software and personnel). • Explore the potential for cooperation with Germany on cyber-defense issues, given the growing focus of the German armed forces in this areas.
	Use the cooperation in smaller, non-EU multilateral defense settings as small microcosms for specialization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cooperation in the Northern Group, the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) can be used as platforms for thematic and geographical specialization and as building blocks for specialization between clusters of countries within the EU (and/or NATO).

	WHAT?	HOW?
DEVELOP CAPABILITIES	<p>Push for a division of labor in tackling the outcome of the CARD review processes in a way that (clusters of) Member States could take the lead in resolving shortages, as well as come up with shared plans for modernization efforts in specific priority capability areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage (new/ad hoc/implicit) forms of specialization in resolving the stated shortfalls and priority capabilities identified in the CARD review, taking into consideration the suggested 55 collaborative opportunities in capability development. • Clusters could be linked to threat scenarios and either be thematically oriented (cyber deterrence, anti-piracy missions, land-based anti-terrorism operations, high-tech expeditionary operations in urban areas, physical and digital critical infrastructure protection, information warfare, etc.). • Cluster leads could make plans using the opportunities offered by PESCO and EDF, and align EU efforts with NATO efforts and national efforts.
	<p>Explore specialization in particular in “new areas” where capabilities still need to be developed by most Member States (cyber, space, hybrid & information, other?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on ideas and proposals, initially with a (very) small number of likeminded countries, in which specialization is used as a tool to quickly fill in current/future capability gaps in new and emerging areas of conflict (be it officially military domains such as cyber and space or otherwise). • The “end state” would still potentially be duplication of efforts and capabilities, but for the short term, a level of specialization (in design, in development, in deployment) could take place to ensure coverage.
	<p>Encourage (new/ad hoc/implicit) forms of specialization by sign up to more (and suggest new) PESCO projects in specific areas; join or suggest related proposals for EDF.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Netherlands currently only leads one, albeit important, PESCO project and participates in 13 others. Building on the positive experience of the Military Mobility project, the Netherlands could consider taking the lead in more PESCO projects to address additional capability shortfalls. • Following the success of the Multinational Multirole Tanker and Transport Fleet (MMF), the Netherlands could explore the option of other specialized shared capabilities with small groups of EU Member States.

	WHAT?	HOW?
CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS	<p>Change and bolster the narrative around the rationale of coordinated defense specialization at the European level, steering it away from its existing negative connotations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push for a change in narrative, in which the concept of specialization is decoupled from the concept of defense budget cuts. In addition to efficiency in times of scarce resources and abundant threats, specialization will help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ resolve current critical shortages and fill in (future) priorities; ○ increase mutual dependencies in a way that it enhances strategic cohesion among allies and partners; ○ help contain national and European knowledge and industries by lowering the risk that businesses leave to emerging powers with large and growing defense budgets; and, ○ strengthen operational effectiveness and quality of striking power by having countries excel in areas of comparative strength.
	<p>Create the necessary trust between (clusters of) EU member states needed to rely on each other in a way that allies within NATO rely on each other and in particular on the US.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress that Article 42.7 TEU (mutual defense clause) and Article 222 TFEU (Solidarity clause) (should/could) have the same weight as Article 5 NATO. • Ensure that the binding clauses of the PESCO agreement are actually perceived as “binding” and linking to the annual monitoring mechanisms instruments to incentivize non-compliant member states, for example through so-called <i>more precise objectives</i>.
	<p>Have a continuous, open dialogue around related topics, providing a range of internal and external perspectives, addressing the bigger and the smaller questions – between core focus areas, between domains, within domains, new areas, between government entities etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This broad and vast and sensitive topic deserves its own strategic dialogue space, ideally one that is more open, experimental and explorative in nature than interdepartmental working groups. • This could be coordinated by a government-wide “Scientific Bureau for Security and Defense” or by a strategic analysis unit as part of a National Security Council.

3.4. BUILDING CONCRETE TOOLS FOR PREVENTING CONFLICT AND MANAGING DESTABILIZATION

What needs to happen for a stronger, more self-reliant EU?

- ❖ Enhanced foresight and risk analysis on emerging conflicts and contingencies in areas in which European interests are at stake and Increase the EU’s ability to mitigate such risks.
- ❖ Create a better understanding amongst military and policy makers alike of the military toolbox available for preventing conflict and managing destabilization - from military diplomacy, to intelligence gathering, (forward) deployment of Special Operation Forces, security sector reform, training and advisory programs, strategic foresight and information and strategic communications operations.
- ❖ Better integrate this military toolbox into relevant EU programming, for example in the programs of the new Global Europe Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (2021-2027).

Why a focus area for the Netherlands?

- ❖ The Netherlands has significant interests all over the world, which also endows it with a strong global network of businesses and NGOs.
- ❖ The Dutch armed forces are well-known for the integrated, comprehensive approach, are technologically advanced, while at the same time keeping a human-centric approach to security.
- ❖ Within the relevant ministries (foreign affairs, defense), conflict anticipation and prevention are growing areas of focus and dedicated teams have already been established and are doing preparatory work.

SUGGESTED NL POLICY OBJECTIVES 2022- 2026

PREVENT 1 | SHAPE INSTITUTIONS

Promote a larger role for EU institutions and programming focused on conflict anticipation, prevention and countering destabilization; further develop understanding of the potential role of the military in pre-escalation conflict stages.

PREVENT 2 | DEVELOP CAPABILITIES

Invest in the human capital necessary for conflict anticipation and prevention, as well as in the ability to use and develop “new” technologies and applications, including remote sensing, satellite imagery and drone technologies.

PREVENT 3 | CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS

Raise the level of urgency for conflict anticipation, prevention and countering destabilization, both at the EU and the national level and both within the government as well as with the broader public (including parliament).

BUILDING CONCRETE TOOLS FOR PREVENTING CONFLICT AND MANAGING DESTABILIZATION
POTENTIAL STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN BY MINISTRY OF DEFENSE/NETHERLANDS 2022-2026

	WHAT?	HOW?
SHAPE INSTITUTIONS	Start pre-preparations for a potential EU civil-military HQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare the ground/minds for a (future) combined EU Civil-Military HQ solving the siloed nature of the MPCC and the CPCC, or complement these. It could initially coordinate EWEA networks and ensure EU-level outcomes are better integrated into decision-making around prevention activities.
	Pitch for better inclusion of <i>military presence</i> and <i>military activities in conflict and destabilization prevention in specific regions of interest</i>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate that the multiannual EU plans for conflict prevention better include instruments such as military diplomacy, choice of training areas, joint training and exercises, countering state capture. To start with, this could be focused on the Balkans or a North African country such as Tunisia.
	Further integrate conflict anticipation and prevention in NL security strategy/strategies and urge other EU members do the same.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of a (new) government-wide security strategy (or integrated foreign and security strategy or Defense White Paper), suggest a clear, multi-annual conflict anticipation and prevention strategy outlining military (and civil) instruments. A national security council is a prerequisite for its success.
	Build a stronger interdepartmental EWEA function with links to likeminded partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the reach of the interdepartmental EWEA function and better tap the network of “human sensors” made up of NL government, businesses, academics, NGOs, e.g. using Delphi studies to gather their insights. Integrate more activities with like-minded countries and institutions, including Germany’s PREVIEW unit and France’s DGRIS.

	WHAT?	HOW?
	<p>Support the delivery of the EU Civilian CSDP Compact and proactively assist in developing a vision for the Civilian Compact beyond 2023.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an adequate level of Dutch contribution for the delivery of the EU Civilian CSDP Compact 2023. • Drive early thinking on the development of the EU Civilian CSDP Compact beyond its 2023 delivery deadline and consider an enhanced role for NL.
DEVELOP CAPABILITIES	<p>Make more use of EU dual-use space capabilities, drone technology and phone applications for monitoring of potential conflict areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of existing EU dual-use space capabilities (Galileo, Copernicus, etc.) and other emerging technology more widely for EWEA. • Push, within and through DG DEFIS, to invest in the emerging space economy focusing on conflict anticipation and prevention, e.g. using geospatial intelligence to detect illicit economic activities, monitor polarization and hate-spreading, or activities related to state capture and terrorism.
	<p>Increase the level of knowledge within government of geographical areas expected to be prone to future conflict in which EU (and Dutch) interests will be compromised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase regional and area level analysis capacity in the intelligence services as well as in regional or strategy focused units in the relevant ministries. • Ensure existing expertise is used widely (within and between ministries, with EU partners, EU Single Intelligence Capacity, EU Sat Center. • Increase the absorption capacity within government institutions and stimulate the necessity of staying informed (beyond what is needed to know to answer parliamentary questions).
	<p>Work more closely with trusted external knowledge partners that can provide continuous analysis on for example MENA, Balkan, Turkey, Caribbean.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work more closely with knowledge partners on specific regions and countries to complement mandates of intelligence services. • To press the costs of such activities, one could commission studies and retainers together with other countries interested in specific regions. • For NL, the focus could for example be on the broader Middle East and North Africa, Turkey, parts of the Caribbean (and areas identified in the strategic foresight exercises).

	WHAT?	HOW?
CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS	Elevate the level of importance (and thus perception) given within the conflict anticipation, prevention and destabilization space to the armed forces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a publicly available strategy, advice or policy analysis on the role and tools of the military in conflict anticipation, prevention and countering destabilization (military diplomacy, SSR, training and advisory, SOF as forward sensors, use of remote imaging, countering state capture) to be used as input and a benchmark at the EU level. • This could be done by activating the AIV-advisory trajectory requested about 5 years ago, or by writing an internal strategy or by commissioning a policy paper (ideally with a small number of other EU partners interested – building on efforts done in the runup to the Strategic Compass). • To raise public (and parliamentary) awareness, there could be more emphasis on analysis of pre-escalation phases of conflict (including state capture, undermining criminality) and the costs that could or can be avoided by early action, in order to instill the worth of conflict anticipation and prevention.
	Elevate the level of importance of conflict anticipation and prevention within the defense organization itself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase the active networks, tools and outcomes of military activities in this field better and more widely, both inside government organizations as well as to the wider public through attractive, unclassified versions of the work conducted (both in NL and potentially target countries). • Elevate the level of attention to conflict prevention tools in the various military education programs (at NL level and at EU level later on) and build understanding of EWEA methods and the tools and instruments available to the military for conflict anticipation and prevention.
	Explore the need for specific legal frameworks necessary for (military) conflict prevention activities and managing destabilization in other countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a study of the existing legal bases for military conflict anticipation and prevention activities, including where a stronger or more appropriate legal basis is desirable (do we need Article 100 letters for this type of military activities?).

3.5 - STIMULATING EU-TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

What needs to happen for a stronger, more self-reliant EU?

- ❖ Strengthening Europe should also mean strengthening NATO as both organizations are necessary for the safety and security of European territorial and other interests.
- ❖ The complexity and diversity of the current threat environment should spur increased alignment and cooperation between the EU and NATO (as hopefully will be shown with the upcoming third EU-NATO cooperation agreement).
- ❖ Ensuring that capability development within the EU also serves NATO (and somewhat vice versa), as 21 countries are members of both organizations.

Why a focus area for the Netherlands?

- ❖ The Netherlands, as a historically European-minded as well as Atlantic actor, should be one of the best advocates and bridge-builders ensuring significant cooperation between more European-minded and the more Atlanticist Member States.
- ❖ The Netherlands is making a subtle policy shift from putting NATO first to having a more equal approach to EU and NATO. It should put effort in implementing this shift in the own organization, while using its argumentation for the policy shift to convince others to follow a similar path.

SUGGESTED NL POLICY OBJECTIVES 2022-2026

T-Atlantic 1 | SHAPE INSTITUTIONS

Establish a clear and convincing vision on the complementarity of the EU and NATO in defense matters and reflect this in national planning and procurement processes, training practices and strategies.

T-Atlantic 2 | DEVELOP CAPABILITIES

Address priority capability shortfalls for both organizations in a coordinate manner and encourage joint efforts in areas where duplication is purely wasting resources.

T-Atlantic 3 | CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS

Invest efforts in making EU-NATO cooperation a win-win situation and try to win over traditionally more Atlanticist countries that remain skeptical to EU defense issues.

STIMULATE EU-ATLANTIC COOPERATION
POTENTIAL STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN BY MINISTRY OF DEFENSE/NETHERLANDS 2022-2026

		WHAT?	HOW?
SHAPE INSTITUTIONS		Ensure complementarity and alignment between various proposals and initiatives in EU and NATO context (Strategic Compass, Strategic Concept to start with).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure conceptual alignment between the texts of the EU Strategic Compass, the Strategic Concept and the EU-NATO Cooperation Statement. • Have the Dutch contribution to the EU Strategic Compass also serve, at least when it comes to the relevant elements, as contribution in the discussions on the new NATO Strategic Concept.
		Advocate texts in the Strategic Compass, Strategic Concept and EU-NATO Cooperation Agreement hinting to an initial (non-institutionalized) sense of a division of labor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate language on respective comparative advantage of the two organizations, with the EU in the short term stepping up responsibility for crisis management, in particular in the southern neighborhood and resilience against cyber and hybrid threats, while NATO’s primary focus remains on collective territorial defense.
		Be a proactive and strategic operator in the new EU-US security and defense dialogue and play a connecting role between Germany, France, the UK and the US.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put efforts in being a connecting force between Germany, France, the UK and the US, promoting mutual cooperation and keeping the focus on the overarching objective of defending Member States and Allies, including territory, but also democratic values and the international rule of law.
		Proactive diplomacy towards NATO allies “skeptical” of stronger European defense cooperation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively approach EU member states fearing that a higher EU military level of ambition may be detrimental to NATO commitments, arguing that this is not about bringing NATO down, but about raising the EU up so that the two can complement one another and lean on respective strengths (using specific scenarios in which NATO would not assist). • Stress the complementarity of Article 42.7 TEU (mutual defense clause) and Article 222 TFEU (Solidarity clause), with article 5 NATO Treaty.

	WHAT?	HOW?
DEVELOP CAPABILITIES	<p>Further increase the linkages between the European Capability Plan and the NDPP, as well as procuring bodies, to address priority capability shortfalls for both organizations, as well as supply chain risks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw on the success story of the cooperation between the European Defense Agency (EDA) and the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) in the procurement of the Multinational Multi-Role Tanker and Transport Fleet and suggest at least one other project for such EU-NATO cooperation. • Seek cooperation in ensuring defense capabilities supply chains being covered as much as possible within EU-NATO settings to decrease dependencies on e.g. China. The inaugural US-EU Trade and Technology Council held in Sept. 2021 and its working groups are a step in that direction.
	<p>Use (Enhanced) Military Mobility as an evolving example of successfully institutionalizing stronger EU-NATO cooperation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call on EU’s regulatory power to ease custom and border procedures for the permission of military equipment transport (and related dangerous goods).¹¹ • Use the Dutch national plan for military mobility as a source of inspiration across the borders. • Use example of successful cooperation with non-EU NATO members to join and strengthen PESCO and other EU initiatives of interest.
	<p>Advocate mergers of EU-NATO initiatives in areas in which doubling is a waste of scarce resources, such as research on climate & security, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, innovation hubs, assessments of impact of Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDTs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage joint research and responses on important (emerging) themes that are relatively similar for both organizations and would simply be a waste of resources if duplicated: climate & security, military mobility, parts of the “Women, Peace and Security agenda”, the impact of EDTs, for example. • Encourage cooperation or even partial mergers of initiatives and efforts that double efforts without good reason. This includes for example the establishment of an EDA Defense Innovation Hub and NATO’s Defense Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic.

¹¹ Giovanna de Maio, “[Opportunities to deepen NATO-EU cooperation](#)”, *The Brookings Institution*, December 2021.

	WHAT?	HOW?
CHANGE (PRE)CONDITIONS	<p>Change the fact that national defense planners view EU requirements as a distant third behind national capability priorities and NATO planning requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate EU planning and procurement requirements and instruments into national defense planning processes, providing these with an equal status compared to NATO requirements. • Conduct a non-biased study of how Dutch defense planners could make better use of instruments such as the CARD and PESCO reviews, as well as the EDF and what changes need to be made in the organization to do so.
	<p>Create a more EU-minded military by introducing recruits from the start, and throughout their career, with the “EU and NATO” approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate the new EU defense cooperation efforts and instruments better into basic and military training and ensure trainers will provide a non-biased view on the added value of both organizations. • Train and exercise more often with EU partners (and open these trainings then up to NATO member states who want to participate). • Send military staff more often to colleges and trainings within Europe, instead of always to the US or the UK.
	<p>Be mindful of filling leadership positions within the defense organization with human capital that has a strong understanding of both EU and NATO.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To see the potential linkages and areas of cooperation between the two organizations, the people in charge - both military as well as civilian leadership - need to have an excellent understanding of the developments in EU and NATO, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of both organizations.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Having Europe step up the game is easier said than done. It will take a considerable amount of time, it will take a lot of money and most importantly, it will take European leaders willing to make a change, in mindset and in deeds.

Agency remains indeed largely with the EU Member States themselves and even more so after Brexit, the Netherlands can become a player of significance at the European stage beyond economic and financial positioning. While it has often been said that the EU is an economic giant but a military dwarf, the same can potentially be argued about a place like the Netherlands.

If the Netherlands really wants to achieve a stronger, more self-reliant Europe in defense matters, it needs to be and be seen as committed, politically - and as a direct extension, financially.¹² Having a steady, long-term vision on what the EU should become, both relative to the member states as well as relative to other global powers, is a must. Such a vision, and its translation into concrete policy objectives, will make it easier to partner with other Member States in the “right” direction.

Political leadership, a steady vision, forward-looking ideas and a budget that matches ambitions with resources, should therefore be regarded as the “golden star” objectives. This also means a display of high-level political pressure and sustained involvement of relevant ministries, Parliament and the Dutch society in shaping and elevating the EU security and defense agendas.

The new Dutch Coalition Agreement presented in December 2021 is a step in the right direction, with 10,7bn euro maintenance and investment funds for the coming four years and a structural topping up of the defense budget with 3bn euro. Spending this money should go hand in hand with a clear plan for the future of the Dutch armed forces and, if a stronger and more self-reliant EU is part of that future, it should be used to ensure that these (future) armed forces can contribute as much as possible to that goal. Drafting the new Defense White Paper is the first significant opportunity for the new Dutch government to do so.

¹² With the current figures, the Netherlands is one of the few countries in the EU displaying a decrease in defense spending measured as a % GDP and remains far from reaching the 2% of GDP agreed in NATO and EU settings. Current projections put the Netherlands stand at 1,38% in 2024 instead.

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About MacroScope Strategies (M2S)

M2S is a boutique consultancy that helps companies, governments, diplomatic missions, and international organizations navigate the new world of diplomacy and government affairs. Our approach unites academic excellence, the application of new technologies, an intimate understanding of the jurisdictions and sectors we cover, and hands-on experiences working in government, diplomacy, and business.

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