



EDA DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

EUROPEAN SPARTAN EXERCISE 2019

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS DAY

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- State Secretary, Generals, Ladies and Gentlemen.
- I wish to start by thanking our Romanian hosts, on behalf of the European Defence Agency, for the excellent organisation of this exercise, and for the opportunity to address all of you today.
- Eight years ago, in 2011, the European Air Transport Fleet partnership was launched by 20 European nations in the framework of EDA to increase the availability of airlift in Europe.
- The core idea of this initiative was to increase efficiency and effectiveness of existing and future fleets, and to optimise the use of air transport organisations and structures.

- Many of the activities developed under the European Air Transport Fleet umbrella are today delivering significant results on a daily basis. One of those is the European Tactical Airlift Centre (ETAC), opened in Zaragoza in June 2017, providing tailor-made training for European crews and support staff for the tactical air transport assets of the Member States.
- Within European Air Transport Fleet, it was quickly agreed that Member States operating the same type of aircraft could find synergies by cooperating.
- The Member States present here today acted on this principle; they brought to life the first European user group dedicated solely to the C-27J in the framework of an EDA programme, named “Spartan Cooperation”.
- The work-programme of “Spartan Cooperation” reads like a 360°- tour of C-27J ownership:
 - logistics optimisation,
 - technical upgrades,
 - aircrew and maintenance type training, and
 - tactical exercises.
- Today, we are witnessing the fourth edition of this European Spartan tactical exercise. What started as an exchange of best practice has now grown into a C-27J

"family event", where aircrews and technicians together have formed a joint community built on mutual trust.

- This will facilitate the sharing the lessons learned from operations through a structured exercise plan, developed by the community's most experienced instructors.
- If you allow me, I would like to reflect the “Spartan Cooperation” programme in the broader context of the progress we have made on strengthening our common defence in the EU over the past couple of years.
- In June 2016, the European Union Global Strategy provided unprecedented impetus for the EU to do more for its security. The development of “full-spectrum defence capabilities” on the basis of defence cooperation has been the overarching objective of all EU defence initiatives since.
- And the successful implementation of these initiatives is now a priority for the EU to become a credible security provider with an appropriate level of strategic autonomy.
- Success means here to make cooperation among Member States on concrete projects happen, leading to a tangible improvement of our single set of forces,

underpinned by a more robust, coherent, interoperable and deployable set of capabilities.

- And this is again where EDA's *raison d'être* comes in: The Agency, in close cooperation with the European Commission, the EU Military Staff, the EU Military Committee and the European External Action Service, has taken up its part in helping to set up, develop and operationalise the EU defence initiatives and foster coherence among the different initiatives. It thereby acts not only as prioritisation and planning forum for Member States but equally as platform for supporting the generation and management of concrete activities, like the one we are talking about today.
- In all our activities, coherence with NATO is thought from the outset. Today, the two organizations are engaged in the implementation of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration, are improving Military Mobility and ensure that activities developed in one framework are not unnecessarily duplicating those being taken forward in the other organisation. Strengthening Member States' defence capabilities will indeed also contribute to a stronger NATO. And today's exercise is another telling example.
- But while developments are encouraging, we should not rest. Strengthening European defence cooperation is

not a given. Maintaining strong political momentum and concrete commitment in terms of resources, common priority setting, common planning and common project implementation will be the key ingredients for lasting success.

- In the near term, we need to fully implement the initiatives that have been launched, not create any new processes. And we have to make sure that they get fully embedded in national planning processes. This exercise is an example of doing, improving our ability to deliver together.
- The European Defence Agency is here to support Member States in their efforts building a “Europe that protects”, and to support model-initiatives like “Spartan Cooperation”, to be taken forward with our key partners.
- I wish to commend all staff of the Spartan Cooperation programme and I encourage the Member States to form similar successful partnerships in other areas.
- Thank you!