

# EVENT REPORT

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

EUROPEAN OFFICE BRUSSELS

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## “Let’s Talk about Security” with MEP David McAllister

22 February 2016 | 12h30 – 14h00 | KAS European Office

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**The European Union (EU) has to face numerous challenges in foreign affairs. International terrorism is on the rise, countries like Russia and China attract a lot of attention not only due to their economic and diplomatic influence in Europe, but especially due to their increasing military activity, and the EU has to fear worsening relations with its longstanding partner, the United States of America, if Trump fulfills his mission statement “America first”. In the context of a globally evolving security environment, the European Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung invited military, political and academic representatives to a discussion round MEP David McAllister, Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee, and Daniel Fiott, Security and Defence Editor at the European Union Institute for Security Studies. Before engaging in a lively debate on the future of foreign affairs cooperation, David McAllister presented his “Report on the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy”.**

### “Stronger and better together”

Through the introduction of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund, the European Union has launched new initiatives in line with President Juncker’s goal of establishing a complete defense union by 2025. The past achievements and the recent progress in the field of European security and defense are unique. Daniel Fiott pointed to the existing amount of energy in Brussels that pushes the developments and cooperation amongst the Member States forward. As none of the European countries have the capability to set up its own security framework, it is only through joint action within

the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) they can have a real impact.

Defence and foreign affairs is thus carrying the potential for deeper integration that is based on the support by the European citizens who desire protection against various, intangible threats.

### Focus on the Western Balkan

According to MEP McAllister, stability in the wider and direct neighborhood is decisive for the creation of a more effective defence and security policy. Next to highly sensitive situations in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen, the “biggest concern” is the rising tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Therefore, the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee supports High Representative Federica Mogherini’s initiative to calm down the tensions in the Middle East. Despite these pressing conflicts, the EU should focus on the situation in the Eastern Partnership countries. By intensifying its enlargement policy, as outlined in the Western Balkan Strategy issued in February 2018, pro-European reforms in that region could be supported and the Western Balkans could become the place where we have most impact, as McAllister stated further. Guided by the slogan “more for more and less for less”, the Eastern Partnership countries should be encouraged to approach the European Union. However, the enlargement strategy is equally about preparing the EU for the prospect of receiving new member states and to educate the public as well as the national parliaments on the possible accession of further countries.

### Coordination, consolidation and cooperation

These three keywords build the main pillars that McAllister’s Report on the Implementa-

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tion of CFSP is based upon. Coordination mainly refers to the tackling of the root causes of instability and conflict in foreign affairs. Consolidation comes into play when talking about the establishment of strong European defence capacities for the Union as a whole. With regard to cooperation, NATO has always been the most important framework of transatlantic partnership for the EU. However, concerns are frequently voiced that purely European initiatives such as PESCO are competing with NATO and are duplicating the alliance's structures. During the Security Talk, McAllister emphasized once more that European cooperation in security and defence is not directed against NATO, but is rather strengthening the European pillar within the alliance, repeating his initial statement of being "stronger and better off, when we work together in Europe". Additionally, the Member of Parliament would like to improve the role of defence and security in the European institutions through the establishment of a separate Directorate-General or even by introducing a responsible commissioner. Hereby, it is especially important to consider the reactions of the European political parties and national parliaments, which have to indicate where and how far they want to go in security and defence cooperation.

The Security Talk with David McAllister and Daniel Fiott has shown that a fundamental concern is the synchronization of security and defence actions at the European level. In times of a highly volatile global environment, it is especially important to get as many Member States on board and to secure their support for joint initiatives. Both experts agreed that a coherent response to international crises is crucial for the EU to remain a strong voice and credible global actor. The EU is thus the right and most suitable platform to debate foreign affairs, as the Member of Parliament clearly stated.