

## CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ST MALO DECLARATION



*Remarks by the French Ambassador H.E. Anne Duchêne at the French Embassy Residence in London to delegates to the Eurodefense London Presidents Council and Conference 13th November 2023*

On 4 December 1999, Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Jacques Chirac adopted the Saint-Malo Declaration, a key milestone in the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

Prime Minister Blair himself described the Declaration as a "historic agreement" during the press conference which followed the Saint-Malo Franco-British Summit.

I think it is worth remembering some key elements stressed in the Declaration which still resonate today, said the Ambassador:

"The Union must have the capacity for autonomous action backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises;

"Europe needs strengthened armed forces that can react rapidly to the new risks, and which are supported by a strong and competitive European defence industry and technology".

The Declaration is, in a sense, the birth certificate of what we then called the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) endorsed at the European Summit in Cologne in 1999

Twenty five years later, what assessment can we make of (what's now known as) the Common Security and Defence Policy?

I would like to highlight in particular three points regarding recent developments:

First the EU and its Member States have proven their ability to adapt: In just a few months, they

repurposed instruments designed for crisis management to provide massive support for Ukraine, in particular through the European Peace Facility (5.6 billion euros mobilised to support the delivery of military equipment to Ukraine) and the EU Military assistance Mission for Ukraine (EUMAM). We adapted these instruments to a new geopolitical context. We are changing the rules of the game, and innovate when it is needed, as illustrated by the landmark deal on joint ammunition purchases.

Secondly, we are thinking differently about the defence industry following the Versailles Summit. EDIRPA (European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Procurement Act) and ASAP (Act in Support of Ammunition Production) which implies investment support for ammunition and missiles for Ukraine - are key instruments in that respect.

Last but not least, the operational side of CSDP is alive and well. We have launched four missions in less than a year: EUMAM Ukraine, EUMA Armenia, EUMPM Niger and EUPM Moldova.

All of this demonstrates that something is changing in the EU's DNA. And the fact that Denmark voted to join the European defence policy is a sign of this accelerating momentum.

Our views on European defence are well known, as expressed repeatedly by President Macron. Europeans must continue to take greater responsibility for their own security. We need to keep this momentum going to build a more capable European defence, complimentary to NATO and contributing effectively to transatlantic security. And there is no denying that stronger European defence is also beneficial to NATO.

Let's be clear: EU-NATO cooperation is more essential than ever to ensure long-term security in Europe. The war in Ukraine has been a test of the solidarity, credibility and complementarity of these two organisations. Both the EU and NATO have swiftly, massively and effectively responded to the challenge posed by the Russian aggression, each with their respective strengths. In that regard, you can count on France to continue promoting EU-NATO cooperation, particularly with a view to the NATO summit in Washington next July.

The France-UK relationship remains the most significant in Europe when it comes to defence and security.

Our two countries' armed forces are the most comparable and advanced in Europe, in size, capabilities and operational experience. We are also responsible nuclear powers and permanent members of the UN Security Council. Our strategic cultures are close, and our military decision-makers all maintain trustful and personal relationships with their counterparts. More than 10 years after the signature of the Lancaster House treaties, our two countries are "and will remain" committed to the security and stability of Europe and its neighbourhood, within multilateral formats such as NATO, as well as through our bilateral cooperation.

Fresh impetus has been given this year to cooperation with the UK, both bilaterally, with the France-UK summit which took place in March, and at the EU level, with the Windsor Framework.

We are already looking to 2024. On a bilateral level, it will be the 120th anniversary of the Entente Cordiale, and the 80th anniversary of the Normandy Landings. We are all determined to mark new milestones and continue working to deepen our relationship. We must demonstrate once again that our bilateral cooperation can be an example and a boost for our allies and partners in tackling the huge challenges we are facing today.