

EUROMIL Wednesday Q&A series

3 Questions on European Defence



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Developing European defence has never been more urgent or higher on the political agenda. President von der Leyen has made the pursuit of a European Defence Union a priority for her second term. What, in your view, are the main barriers slowing down deeper defence cooperation?

Today, we face an urgent need to strengthen and better integrate European preparedness in response to escalating cross-border crises and evolving security challenges. This urgency becomes even more evident against the backdrop of a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape. Whether it is Russia's aggression in the East, the resurgence of Trumpism in the West, increasing migratory pressures from the South, or the relentless threat of climate change looming over us all, our ability to safeguard security and stability depends on **how effectively we rise to meet these challenges, together**, despite the fact that EU Member States do not always share the same sense of urgency on specific challenges. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance to understand resilience encompasses both military as societal dimensions.

How to collectively tackle such challenges?

To move forward with increased defence cooperation at the European level, we must first answer the following questions: "How can the European Union ensure it is ready to respond effectively and cohesively to the defence challenges ahead?", "Is the EU prepared to act beyond the current limitations of the Common Security and Defence Policy". Addressing these questions decisively and cooperatively will be crucial in enabling seamless cooperation within a genuine **Whole-of-Society approach**.

Military Mobility is one of the key PESCO projects aiming at enhancing European defence readiness. What are the main obstacles currently hindering military mobility across Europe, and what measures are needed to overcome them?

From a military perspective, Military Mobility is, and will remain, central to the EU's strategic resilience, operational readiness, and the civil-military synergies that underpin our collective security.



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The EU Member States forces, often remain too slow, too restricted, and too fragmented in their movement. Put simply: the military still has to fight to get to the fight. Since years of political declarations and repeated calls for action, we are still struggling to ensure that military forces can move quickly and effectively across European territory. Three main reasons are the cause of it:

- **Firstly**, the sense of urgency is – still – not shared equally among all stakeholders involved.
- **Secondly**, while Military Mobility is widely discussed, there remains a lack of common understanding about what it truly entails in practical, operational terms.
- **Thirdly**, the question of ownership remains unresolved. Responsibilities are dispersed across various actors and levels, leading to fragmentation that complicates coordination.

From a military perspective, Military Mobility encompasses three key domains that require focused attention. We must address all three of them simultaneously and with equal attention – none can be left aside. These are:

- Peace time EU & National legislation and regulations,
- Infrastructure (not only LOCs but also Logistics Hubs and CSC), and
- Capabilities (again not only Assets but also Services, such as refuelling)

The fact that EU Schengen does not apply to the military should not withhold us from reflecting on an EU Military Schengen, both for military personnel and equipment. Overall, it is essential to pursue a **Whole-of-Government**, and by extension, a **Whole-of-Society approach** – both at EU and national levels. Although the EU White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030, and the Preparedness Union Strategy reaffirm Military Mobility as a flagship initiative, they also clearly indicate that progress must accelerate

Through our united efforts, innovations and shared commitment, we are prepared to build what I call a **civil-military enabling framework**: a comprehensive structure that encompasses infrastructure, legislation, procedures, assets, and services. However, designing the framework is only half the challenge. The real test lies in **executing it, exercising it** – turning agreements into implementation, and concepts into operational reality.