



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF HUNGARY

CSABA HENDE
Minister

09. April, 2014

H. E. Baroness Catherine Ashton

High Representative of the European Union
for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice President of the European Commission
BRUSSELS

Dear High Representative,

On behalf of the Defence Ministers of the Visegrád Cooperation (V4) as well as of the Central European Defence Cooperation (CEDC) I would like to inform you on the outcomes of our meetings in Visegrád, Hungary on the 13-14th of March.

V4 states have taken a significant step towards deepening their defence cooperation as V4 Defence Ministers signed three documents of strategic importance: 1) *the Long Term Vision on Deepening our Defence Cooperation*, 2) *the Framework for our Enhanced Defence Planning Cooperation* and 3) *the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of a V4 EU Battlegroup* to be in stand-by in the first half of 2016.

The Long Term Vision envisions our cooperation mainly, but not exclusively, on three critical areas: 1) capability development, procurement and defence industry; 2) the establishment of multinational units and running cross border activities; 3) education, training and exercises.

As far as capability development is concerned we have decided that in case of major acquisitions it should be a general rule for us to first examine the possibility of a common or coordinated procurement, be it in quadrilateral, bilateral or trilateral formations. In this endeavour we are seeking to exploit the mechanisms of the European Defence Agency and NATO Support Agency. The frameworks and structure of our defence planning cooperation have been elaborated in details in the document on Enhanced Defence Planning Cooperation.

The establishment of the V4 EU Battlegroup has been the focal point of our practical cooperation: we believe that thereby we can reinforce our operational and capability development efforts, as well as contribute to the military rapid response capability of the European Union. With the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding we have moved

one step closer to the realization of this project. Besides, it was decided that the Battlegroup should serve as a basis for more permanent cooperation and establishment of multinational units, building on lessons learned achieved during its preparatory phase.

We also decided to hold joint V4 military exercises on an annual basis. In order to organize these in a systematic and effective way we are preparing a V4 Training and Exercise Strategy. The first exercise of this kind will be the validation exercise of our V4 EU BG which will take place in 2015 with the aim to be linked to NATO's Trident Juncture '15 high visibility exercise.

As to the cooperation of the CEDC states so far it has produced successful capability development projects for example in the area of helicopter pilot and SOF training, CBRN defence and logistical cooperation. In this format we have considered launching new projects aimed at the creation of a regional cross-border disaster management cooperation, and the establishment of a regional joint terminal air controller (JTAC) training centre.

We discussed the crisis in Ukraine and shared a view that the territorial integrity of Ukraine has to be respected and that constructive negotiations were needed for a peaceful solution.

We also exchanged views on the security situation in the Balkans. We agreed that the presence of the international community in both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo plays a key role in preserving stability and security.

Finally, let me express my strong belief that our regional cooperation and defence-related endeavours in Central Europe send a good message to our European and euro-atlantic partners and contribute to the common efforts of the European Union and NATO.

For your information, I send a copy of this letter to every Member State of the European Union.

Yours sincerely,



Csaba Hende