

STATEMENT OF INTENT

BETWEEN THE MINISTER FOR THE ARMED FORCES OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC AND THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS ON STRENGTHENING THE STRATEGIC DEFENCE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO MINISTRIES OF DEFENCE

The Minister for the Armed Forces of the French Republic

And

The Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands,

Strategic and political framework

1. Considering the changing security environment of Europe and the new geopolitical context;
2. Considering the common participation of the French Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the EU, NATO, the UN and OSCE, as well as the common wish to enhance bilateral defence initiatives in order to strengthen European Defence;
3. Considering the excellent defence cooperation between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the French Republic;
4. Considering that this cooperation will necessarily have to be strengthened in view of the changing international context and the specific interests of both States;
5. Considering that two agreements are being drafted:
 - on the bilateral defence cooperation, in order to bring together under a single legal document all the already existing fields of military cooperation on the metropolitan territories of both States,
 - on the defence cooperation and the status of the armed forces in the territories in the Caribbean and South America of the French Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Structure of the strengthening of defence cooperation

6. Wish to further strengthen the defence cooperation between the French Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands through a strategic partnership in order to best secure the common interests of both States in defence-related areas;
7. Believe that this common wish will have to be reflected in the preamble to the draft agreement on bilateral defence cooperation being negotiated between the two States;
8. Consider that this Statement of Intent will serve as a guideline to ministerial departments of both States, by listing, non-exhaustively, the fields in which a strengthening of cooperation between both States is foreseen;

9. Acknowledge that this strategic partnership cannot be properly implemented without regular high-level political and military meetings, and that the following authorities will meet as follows:
- a. a ministerial meeting at least once a year;
 - b. a meeting between defence policy directorates in principle twice a year;
 - c. a meeting between the national armaments directors at least once a year;
 - d. a meeting between the capability directors at least once a year.

Fields in which defence cooperation might be strengthened

10. Fields in which defence cooperation might be strengthened may be those listed in point 11. This list is by no means exhaustive. Each field may be the subject of specific provisions in the Agreement on bilateral defence cooperation, if necessary.
11. Fields in which it is desirable to strengthen and/or pursue cooperation include:
- a. cooperation prior to combined missions and operations, in the framework of the EU, NATO, the UN or ad hoc coalitions;
 - b. cooperation in combined missions and operations, in the framework of the EU, NATO, the UN or ad hoc coalitions, including areas of common interest in which the EU, NATO or UN do not specifically operate;
 - c. capability cooperation, by endeavouring to significantly increase the interoperability between armed forces of both States;
 - d. armament cooperation, including innovation, Research&Development, and development of weapons systems, soldier protection and support, and their support on duty; the intensifying cooperation in this field will preferably be supported by the opportunities offered by the European Defence Fund;
 - e. cooperation in land, naval, air and Special Operations Forces domains;
 - f. development of common positions, where possible, in the EU, NATO, the UN and other relevant organisations;
 - g. further development of the EU-NATO cooperation;
 - h. cooperation within the European Intervention Initiative, in which the French Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands play a driving role, working towards a common strategic culture, especially in those areas in which both States share a common interest;
 - i. arms control, notably in the framework of activities conducted within NATO;
 - j. cooperation on strategic intelligence;
 - k. information exchanges and synergy development (e. g. in human resources);
 - l. staff exchanges;
 - m. war-wounded veterans meetings.

12. Agree that this Statement of Intent does not constitute a commitment to fund or participate in this cooperation, nor a legally binding commitment between the signatories under either national or international law.

Signed in Eindhoven on 6 May 2019.



H.E. Ank Bijleveld-Schouten
Minister of Defence of the
Kingdom of the Netherlands



H.E. Florence Parly
Minister for the Armed Forces
of the French Republic