**“Dealing with emerging technologies in the security and military domain”**

**Statement at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Dutch House of Representatives, 3 Feb 2021**

Dr. Ulrike Franke, Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations

1. The Netherlands should publish a strategy on AI in the military realm and encourage other Europeans to do the same.
2. The Netherlands should encourage NATO to work (even more) on interoperability challenges related to the introduction of AI in the military realm.
3. The Netherlands, together with other Europeans, should fund European and Europe-focused research on the implications of AI in the military realm and on geopolitics.

Understanding the implications of AI in the military realm and working on ways on how to benefit from the advantages it offers while putting in place regulation where needed is a European and international challenge which no one country can take on alone. However, the Netherlands, as a member state of the European Union and NATO, is an important actor in this context.

**Recommendation 1) The Netherlands should publish a strategy on AI in the military realm and encourage other Europeans to do the same.**

The Dutch Strategic Action Plan on AI states that the Ministry of Defence “is developing a vision for AI in which attention will be paid to the use of AI in military functions.” This vision was supposed to be published in 2020 but appears to have been delayed. It would be good if it were published in 2021.

Publishing such a military AI strategy would make the Netherlands the second country to do so in Europe (after France). Most European states are tight-lipped on whether and how they want to use AI in the military realm. Of the 21 national AI strategies published in the EU over the last years, only a handful mention military usages of AI. This stands in a stark contrast with the United States, but also China, where military AI is discussed in detail.

The Netherlands should publish its strategy and encourage other Europeans to do the same. If the EU wants to cooperate more on weapons development and build up its defence capabilities, the first step is to exchange ideas on how AI (and other emerging technologies) may be utilised by national armed forces. Equally, Europeans should address concerns together, such as on autonomous weapons regulations which will need to be international if at all effective.

**Recommendation 2) The Netherlands should encourage NATO to work on AI-related interoperability challenges**

NATO has begun work on this topic, but NATO depends on member states’ input and member state requests. The Netherlands could play a role in making sure NATO takes on the issues, specifically on ensuring interoperability between NATO allies, and standard setting.

**Recommendation 3) The Netherlands, together with other Europeans, should fund Europe-focused research on implications of AI in the military realm and on geopolitics.**

The large majority of (political sciences, military studies…) research on AI in the military realm, and the impact of AI on geopolitics is US- or China focused. Existing European research tends to concentrate primarily on arms control and disarmament challenges, which are important but should not be the exclusive focus. Even information on European military AI capabilities is difficult to find given the relative lack of European research. The Netherlands, together with other Europeans, should fund European-focused research on the impact AI has on Europe’s military capabilities and geopolitical standing, possibly in form of the creation of a research institute similar to the Centre for Security and Emerging Technology in the US.