

CATHERINE ASHTON

HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

B-1046 BRUSSELS  
+32-2-298 85 90

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A(2012)624164 - 727576

Lord Teverson  
House of Lords  
European Union Committee  
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Policy  
London SW1A 0PW  
United Kingdom

Dear Mr.,

Thank you for sending me a copy of your recent report on European defence. Your Committee's work is to be commended.

"*European Defence Capabilities: lessons from the past, signposts for the future*" makes for very interesting reading. I share the broad thrust of its conclusions. I believe the report captures the main challenges facing CSDP in what looks like being a prolonged period of austerity for Europe with clear indications that the focus of the United States of America is shifting to the Asia/Pacific region.

As you recognise, we need to do better with less and that is going to require a strong and continuous political commitment as well as a sea change in how we go about the practical business of defence. I believe that to succeed, this has to be a collective endeavour of the Member States. Some of the issues you raise such as force generation for military operations or civil missions, and how we can encourage better use of scarce resources – through initiatives like pooling and sharing – are at the forefront of our attention. And while there are no easy fixes there are some encouraging signs that our Member States are now more willing to cooperate together to retain or develop capabilities they could not afford on their own, and thus strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of CSDP.

I was also pleased to read your positive comments on the European Defence Agency. This small organisation has tremendous potential, but like all intergovernmental bodies its success depends heavily on the whole-hearted support of its Member States. I believe that, with Member States behind it, the Agency will deliver strengthened European capabilities.

A number of the recommendations set out in your report have already been – or will be – considered and implemented in our work on taking CSDP forward. I have asked the document to be brought to the attention of all my staff working in this field.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Ashton