



Mr Josep BORRELL FONTELLES

Vice-President of the European Commission for a Stronger Europe in the World
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

20 April 2020

Dear Mr Vice-President,

Let us address you with a pending issue of high importance to the security of the European continent and directly related to the need for effective EU crisis management highlighted by the challenges of the COVID19 pandemic - the military mobility.

The unprecedented challenge posed to the EU and Member States by COVID19, when several countries have been severely hit by the coronavirus putting extreme pressure on national health systems, majority are facing PPE and medical devices' shortages, whilst cross-border movements remain restricted, provides us with lessons to be learned. This is a crisis of civilian nature, but NATO and national military forces have already proven to be a part of solutions supporting civilian response to COVID19 - especially in delivering medical aid using airlift capabilities. On the other hand, some countries in urgency for quick relief relied instead on transport of Russia-related companies for delivery of medical devices and PPE.

Therefore, more must be done by the EU, as decisions on military mobility are entirely in the hands of the EU. This is connected to the EU strategic autonomy. The crises of such nature, i.e. not arising from conventional armed act, are the area where EU needs to develop effective mechanisms.

The military mobility in Europe would provide for increased flexibility for prompt action in preventing and responding to crises, demonstrate the resolve of EU and NATO to potential geopolitical adversaries and also would be instrumental for delivering aid in civilian crises. The EU could provide a very real and significant added value, not only with regard to coordination and streamlining cross-border procedures, but most importantly with regard to adjusting and developing infrastructure.

Unfortunately, to our knowledge, there is no intention to provide resources for military mobility in the next MFF. The lack of political will would be a big mistake, as the EU would not be able to have an important mechanism for promptly and efficiently reacting to the needs during big-scale civilian crises Europe faces now and may face also in the future.

We believe, this is the opportunity for the EU to come out of the crisis stronger, as it was the case in the past. Therefore, let us ask you to keep the issue of military mobility high on your agenda. We would also be grateful if you could indicate the next steps and upcoming decisions in this regard.

With the best wishes of strong health for you, your family and your team,

Sincerely,

Rasa JUKNEVIČIENĖ, EPP, Lithuania

Attila ARA-KOVÁCS, S&D, Hungary