Generals,
Distinguished audience,
Dear Cadets,

It is an honour for me to be in here in Kiev on invitation of your Commander in Chief General Vladimir Zamana.

It is an honour but also a real pleasure to address you in this prestigious University and I want to thank you very sincerely for your warm welcome.

For several years the growing intensity of our mutual visits demonstrates the strong will of Ukraine and the European Union to develop mutual relations.

As president Van Rompuy said in December 2011: "Ukraine is a partner of strategic importance for the European Union. We share not only the common interest but also the common ambition of a closer EU-Ukraine relationship. Hopefully it is the beginning of the important period in which we can fully share common values and common interests".

On both sides indeed, we work jointly to make multilateral institutions more effective, so as to reinforce global governance but also to strengthen convergence on regional and international issues.

As Chairman of the EU Military Committee, Chairman of 28 CHODs, I would like to share some thoughts with you on the development of the European Defence and more particularly on the Common Security and Defence Policy, what is often called "CSDP".

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Today war-time memories are slowly fading in Europe and it is a positive thing.
But as we are well aware, organised crime, terrorism, cyber hackers, piracy or climate changes do not respect national borders. Furthermore "failed States" pose security issues and can lead to ripple effects. Therefore an undivided Europe of 28 Member States cannot be a Union that does not care about what happens beyond its borders. It needs also to be a Union that takes into consideration what aspirations other Nations have, especially those that are at the margins of EU's borders. That leads to neighbourhood.

Moreover, we all know that the results achieved through our strong determination to preserve peace and stability will be beneficial for all of us.

That is why the efforts to develop a more secure world are, indeed, at the heart of the European Union's engagement. That is also why it is EU's interest to enhance partnership with those that are willing.

But before developing this item, let me remind you of some information and key figures.

- The European Union is a unique institution for close political and economic cooperation into which all the Members States have entered step by step. What was initially a limited cooperation, between six core countries has grown to become a unique body uniting 28 European democracies.

- 503 Million people, a total Gross National Product of some 12 Billion Euro and close to 20 % of world trade are some of its characteristics. Seventeen of the Member States are also united by a common currency, the Euro.

- Furthermore the Schengen Area is also one of the greatest achievements of the EU. It is an area without internal borders which guarantees free movement to more than 400 million EU citizens as well as to many non-EU nationals, businessmen, tourists or other persons legally present on the EU territory. Today, 22 EU Members States can enjoy passport-free travel.

- But the European Union is not a "super state" directed by a federal government. The nations remain sovereign, and the 28 governments retain most of their prerogatives.

- However, it is not simply a free trade area either. There is a European Parliament, a European administration, an External Action Service and a European budget, as well as other decision-making structures in Brussels.

I. This broad introduction now brings me to my main topic, the EU Common Security and Defence Policy.

The EU Common Security and Defence Policy was launched in 1999 in order to enable the European Union to assume its responsibilities for crisis management. So permanent political and military structures have been established and, in particular:
• The European Union Military Committee (EUMC), which I chair, and which is the highest military body set up within the Council. It is composed of the Chiefs of Defence of the Member States, who are regularly represented by their permanent military representatives.

The EUMC provides to the ambassadors representing their Nations - with advice and recommendations on all military matters, within the EU. The decision process is led by consensus, each Nation having equal vote.

• As Chairman of the Military Committee, I am also the military advisor to Lady Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and the Security Policy. She chairs the meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence. Based on my professional experience, my role is to provide a personal analysis of on-going situations, particularly problems raised by the 27 chiefs-of-staff.

• Responding to the new challenges, the EU Member States are also committed, since 2007, on a rotating basis to keep two Battle Groups in high readiness. You know this very well as you have already committed forces to them. I will come back to this in a short while

II. The European Union is now moving ahead. And I can say that it has become a valuable security provider which is making a real difference.

• Thirteen years after launching the CSDP, the European Union is now endowed with a chain of command, an operational capability, a legitimacy and concrete experience in terms of external crisis management.

Military operations are seen as a part of a broader EU strategy. The ultimate solution of a crisis will always be political, and will require the use of civilian means just as much as military one. This is the reason why we believe that security should be addressed with a comprehensive approach including diplomacy, development, security and defence lines of operations.

As a matter of fact, the European Union is the only international organisation which is able to act simultaneously on all the factors at play in a crisis: diplomatic action, credible military force, advice and training on judicial, police and administrative matters, commercial assistance and development aid.

The European External Action Service is bringing real added value to global conflict management. Through its 141 delegations or embassies around the world, especially in our neighbourhood, it maintains an extensive diplomatic network that is capable of supporting and enhancing Member States’ actions. Here in Kiev it is Ambassador Jan Tombinski who heads the permanent EU delegation.

Also, by convening the "Crisis Platform" in Brussels, when appropriate, it brings together all relevant stakeholders (EEAS, the Council, civilian and military experts, the Commission, EU representatives within international organizations...) with the aim to assist decision-making.
Today the European Union is making a real difference

In just 10 years, 9 missions or military operations have been launched mobilizing nearly 10,000 soldiers, under the European Union's flag.

- For instance, the European Union has introduced an unprecedented comprehensive strategy in the Horn of Africa, whereby numerous complementary actions and interventions are progressively being undertaken. There are three major CSDP missions or operations underway:
  - Since 2008 Operation EU Navfor Atalanta is tackling piracy off the coast of Somalia and protecting WFP shipping, together with other actors such as NATO, the number of ships in hostages in the region has dropped significantly. (32 in January 2011 to only 4 one year later).
  - EUTM Somalia Mission is also an emblematic example that CSDP missions can make a difference on the ground: around 3,000 soldiers who have been engaged in the fight against El Shebab have been trained by Europeans soldiers. Work remains to be done but the situation in Somalia is better than two years ago. As highlighted by attacks against UN but also against Kenya: EU is fighting terrorism.
  - With the EUTM Mission in Mali, the European Union is showing that the 28 Member States are really concerned about the stability in this part of the African continent. After assessing and then giving advice for the reform of the Malian armed forces, the third battalion started its training a few days ago. Together, with the 23 Member States engaged in the mission, it has fostered regional awareness and demonstrated the will to commit collectively to this mission. I know that Ukraine has shown interest in a future participation and I really hope that this can happen.
  - The operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, launched in 2004 under the agreement with NATO, contributes to the maintenance of the safe and secure environment in BiH. The commitment of 18 Member States and several third is crucial and provides support to the country.
  - Finally, Battlegroups provide ability to raise the level of capabilities and also the opportunity to enhance interoperability between partners (Helbroc BG, Visegrad BG).

III. As a security provider, the European Union is also preparing the future, together, with its neighbours.
Today we are entering a new era where challenges require responses that are beyond the means of individual States.

As Lady Ashton recently said: “In our globalised world, we need to help each other […] We need to cooperate more closely to solve the disputes and conflicts that still hold parts of our region back”.

Because of its proximity, providing security in the region that the EU calls its “Neighbourhood”, which includes Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Balkans and the Mediterranean basin, is a clear priority.

It is a priority because it provides lines of communication as well as assets of the utmost importance for trade which can be disrupted by crises in the area.

It is a priority because in some cases it is a passage for large-scale migration.

Last but not least, it is a priority because any crisis in this region will potentially have a direct impact on European wider security.

We all know that the nature of the world is such that what will later seem obvious today is opaque and unpredictable. And we, the military, have to be prepared for what we can never know.

It becomes obvious that we have to develop a broad, pragmatic, and realistic approach. It has to be adapted to reality, taking into account risks of any kind which might create a security problem in the broader sense.

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To conclude, I would like to say that Europe was born out of the ashes of a war. Upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo last December, European leaders said the European Union stands by those in pursuit of peace and human dignity.

The world around us is changing fast. And today, we must do more to shape events. With your country, we Europeans, have common interest in security issues.

That is also why we have to build together an even stronger cooperation in order to meet the security challenges that our world has to face.

I thank you again for giving me the honor of being here and I would be happy to continue a dialogue on the basis of questions and issues that you may want to raise.