As part of a series of events to brief the elected Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) of the European People’s Party, the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies organised its first round table on security and defence policy. The event was co-organised with the European Security Round Table. Newly elected MEPs Artis Pabriks (Latvia) and Christos Stylianides (Cyprus), seven re-elected MEPs, Elmar Brok, Jerzy Buzek, Andrej Plenković, Michael Gahler, Dubravka Šuica, Aljoz Peterle and David McAllister, and Jamie Shea, Deputy Assistant Secretary General from NATO and Claude-France Arnould from the European Defence Agency as well as other experts, took part in the discussion.

Keynote speaker, Elmar Brok, pointed out that the majority of Europeans want more Europe in the common security and defence area. Most participants were optimistic about the prospect of a common European defence policy, despite the current lack of resources and political will. Brok warned that defence is crucial for European success: without a defence industry and research one loses influence, strength, and becomes dependent.

The Lisbon Treaty provides possibilities for common defence such as battle groups, but so far they have not been used much. However, there are clusters of defence unions like the nuclear cooperation between France and Britain or a permanent joint use of units and infrastructure between the Dutch and Belgian navies. Connecting those clusters could be a good starting
Jamie Shea and Artis Pabriks also stressed the necessity to cooperate with NATO and to ensure 'equal security for every European citizen', which also means investing in those regions that need it most. Moreover, it is above all important to persuade Europeans that solidarity with high-risk regions, such as with the Baltic states, is necessary in order to ensure the security of all Europeans. The EU should not invest only in its soft power, but must back it up with hard power, especially in times when US engagement decreases.