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## **AFTER MACRON, EU EXECUTIVE ECHOES EU ARMY CALL**

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Reuters (6 November 2018)

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - An EU army is likely to be formed one day, the European Commission said on Tuesday after French President Emmanuel Macron called for a real European army to reduce dependence on the United States.

Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, a former premier of Luxembourg, has long been a vocal supporter of the idea that the European Union should have more common defense capability, separate from the U.S.-dominated NATO military alliance.

The imminent departure from the bloc of Britain, long opposed to EU military collaboration, has revived discussion of defense cooperation □ as have concerns that President Donald Trump may be less willing than his predecessors to come to Europe's defense in the face of a newly assertive Russia.

Some EU leaders share Britain's view that giving the EU a big military role could undermine NATO. Traditionally neutral, non-NATO countries in the Union are also wary. However, most member states agreed last December to cooperate on funding and developing their armed forces.

Asked about Macron's remark earlier in the day and whether the Commission supported the creation of a European army, chief spokesman Margaritis Schinas noted that new EU project to collaborate on defense procurement and research as well as new EU military peacekeeping missions beyond Europe's borders.

This is the Commission that put forward lots of initiatives and proposals to start building gradually a more meaningful and assertive defense identity in these difficult geopolitical times, he told reporters at a regular briefing.

I don't think that this defense identity will start with an EU army, Schinas said.

We'll see that at some point in time, probably down at the end of this process, we may see something that people already describe as an EU army or an EU pooling of resources to make this EU defense identity more visible and more meaningful.

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