Seventy former European Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, Defense Ministers, diplomats and military figures today urged current leaders to get beyond recent divisions on Ukraine - and the zero-sum Cold War logic they reflect - and to start a new process of Euro-Atlantic trust-building and politically mandated security dialogue, the European Leadership Network (ELN) said.

The ELN statement said that even though the European Union (EU) Council will meet this week to discuss Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) for the first time since 2008, there will be little or no discussion of the remaining deep security tensions and divisions within Europe itself.

“In our view, this is a missed opportunity,” the ELN statement said. “The status quo increases security risks on the continent, reduces the ability of all Europeans to work together to meet common external threats, fosters mistrust, and costs European tax-payers heavily in extra spending on defense at a time when economic and social pressures are huge.”

They said key points that should be dealt with include:

- Enhanced transparency, predictability and trust in Euro-Atlantic military affairs to decrease fear of a short warning attack on the continent.
• Measures to increase leadership decision time, especially in relation to the thousands of nuclear weapons in Europe, many of which remain on short notice to fire.

• Moves to allow all elements of offence and defense, nuclear and conventional weapons, and cyber-security and militarization of outer space to be considered in a single new security construct.

• Steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons as an essential part of any nation's overall security posture in Europe, without jeopardizing the security of any of the parties.

• Initiation of a process to transition the Euro-Atlantic area from the remnants of mutual assured destruction, to mutual understanding, to mutual early warning, to mutual defense, to mutual security.

Signatories to the statement from all parts of Europe and from all sides of the political spectrum include: Javier Solana and Ana Palacio (Spain); Wolfgang Ischinger, Volker Rühe and Rudolf Scharping (Germany); Malcolm Rifkind, Des Browne and David Owen (UK); Adam Daniel Rotfeld, and Janusz Onyskiewicz (Poland); Igor Ivanov and Vyacheslav Trubnikov (Russian Federation).

(The full text of the statement)