

Security and defence: Council adopts conclusions

EU foreign and defence ministers today discussed the EU Global Strategy. Following the discussion, the Council adopted conclusions on security and defence in the context of the EU Global Strategy.

Noting that since the launch of the EU Global Strategy in June 2016, the EU has taken **ground-breaking steps forward** in the area of security and defence, the Council welcomes the substantive progress made to enhance the security of the Union and its role as a security provider and global actor, including through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The Council underlines the need to **maintain the momentum** through continued engagement of member states and EU institutions.

By addressing Europe's current and future security and defence needs, the EU is enhancing its capacity to act as a security provider, its strategic autonomy and its ability to cooperate with partners.

Council conclusions on security and defence in the context of the EU Global strategy, 17 June 2019

The conclusions take stock of progress and provide further guidance on the various strands of work on security and defence cooperation. The areas covered include:

- **CSDP missions and operations**

The Council highlights the significant contribution of CSDP missions and operations to international peace and stability, as an essential part of the **EU's integrated approach to conflicts and crises**. The EU presently deploys ten civilian CSDP missions and six military CSDP operations across three continents in which around 4 500 men and women are currently deployed.

- **Climate change**

The Council underlines the importance of environmental issues and climate change for security and defence.

- **Civilian CSDP compact**

The Council welcomes the work done on the joint action plan by the EEAS and Commission services in which they describe the range of actions to be undertaken at EU-level to support the implementation of the civilian CSDP compact.

- **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)**

The Council welcomes the completion of the first annual PESCO cycle as well as the progress made by participating member states in **fulfilling the more binding commitments**, notably those related to defence budgets, joint defence investment and the initial use of EU tools, initiatives and instruments in national defence **planning**.

The Council recalls that the participating member states will advance the work and focus on the swift and effective implementation of the existing 34 PESCO projects and encourages them to jointly submit **new project proposals no later than 31 July 2019**.

The Council recognises that **a third State could, and would need to, provide substantial added value to the PESCO projects**, contribute to strengthening PESCO and the CSDP and meet more demanding commitments, while fully respecting the principle of decision-making autonomy of the EU and its member states. In this context, the Council looks forward to the adoption as soon as possible of a Council Decision on the general conditions under which third States could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects.

- **Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD)**

The Council looks forward to the launch of the first full CARD cycle starting with CARD bilateral dialogues in September 2019, with a view to providing ministers in Autumn 2020 with a comprehensive review on the state of the European capability landscape.

- **European Defence Fund**

The Council looks forward to the swift adoption and implementation of the European Defence Fund, following the common understanding reached in February by the European Parliament and the Council on the related Regulation and once an overall agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027 is reached. The Council stresses the importance of the fund in helping **to enhance the competitiveness, efficiency and innovation capacity of the European defence technological and industrial base** throughout the Union. The Council also welcomes the foreseen role of the fund in promoting disruptive technologies for defence.

- **EU- NATO cooperation**

Considering that the EU and NATO have shared values and continue to face common security challenges, the Council welcomes the fourth progress report submitted jointly by the High Representative/Vice President/Head of Agency and the Secretary General of NATO on the implementation of the common set of proposals (a total of 74 actions) highlighting **key achievements**, including in the areas of political dialogue, military mobility, countering hybrid threats, parallel and coordinated exercises, as well as defence capabilities.

- **Countering hybrid threats**

The Council welcomes the work done on countering hybrid threats, which has advanced at a good pace, reinforced after the Salisbury attack, in particular on situational awareness, strategic communication, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks, cyber security and counter-intelligence. The Council welcomes the increasing array of possible response measures at EU level, including the autonomous cyber sanctions regime, the autonomous sanctions regime against the use of chemical weapons, as well as the coordinated response to disinformation through the action plan against disinformation and the creation of the Rapid Alert System together with member states to improve information sharing.

- **Military mobility**

The Council welcomes the ongoing implementation of efforts in improving military mobility both at the EU level and by the member states, in a coherent and coordinated manner and in close cooperation with NATO, and provides further guidance on the way forward.

The conclusions also refer to coherence among EU defence initiatives (CARD, PESCO, European Defence Fund), EU-UN cooperation, partnerships, the mutual assistance and solidarity clauses of the Treaty (article 42.7 and article 222), cyber defence, and situational awareness.

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