

COVID-19

LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EU SECURITY AND DEFENCE

The EU is reflecting on key lessons and implications that the COVID-19 pandemic presents for its security and defence. The aim is to be ready to confront possible security consequences of the current pandemic and to become better prepared and resilient for the future.

The armed forces of European Member States play a crucial role in addressing the pandemic, by supporting civilian actors and providing cross-border support. Outside EU borders, the EU continues to support our partners also through EU military and civilian missions and operations. For example, the EU's missions in Sahel and Niger support local authorities by providing equipment and raising awareness, e.g. working with radio stations.

PARTNERSHIPS

- → Enhanced global competition demands strong multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core
- → Closer coordination with **NATO**, e.g. looking for synergies and avoiding duplications
- → **Dialogue and cooperation** with all international partners to cope with the pandemic
- → Coordination with partners on the ground (13 of the 17 EU CSDP missions and operations share the same theatre with UN missions)

SOLIDARITY

- EU Member States armed forces are helping each other
 - → EEAS Task Force* supports and facilitates information exchange on national military assistance to civilian authorities

RESPONSIVNESS

- → Monitoring possible impact on the security and stability beyond EU borders - such as terrorism, e.g. in the Sahel
- → Our EU missions and operations need to be adaptable to changing circumstances and help partners
 - → Fast track planning and decisions-making procedures
 - → Making best use of our EEAS **Early Warning System** for conflict prevention and enhance if necessary



Covid-19

EU SECURITY & DEFENCE

5 KEY INITIAL LESSONS LEARNED

CAPABILITIES

- → Identify options for **EU civilian missions** to contribute to the EU response to the pandemic
- → **PESCO projects:** can generate collaborative projects enhancing the Union's preparedness and resilience
- → **European Defence Fund** and **Military Mobility** need to be adequately funded, will also help EU's economic recovery
- → EEAS incl. Military Staff could undertake **stocktaking analysis** to evaluate critical capabilities and existing gaps



PREPAREDNESS

- → Addressing vulnerabilities e.g. in cyber, hybrid, disinformation, or Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) threats
- → Coordinated **civil-military response**, e.g. through exercises and training
- → Improving the protection of the **EU's internal information and communication networks**



* The EEAS Task Force (TF) provides a centralised information sharing platform for national military assistance and mutual support between the Member States' armed forces in support of civilian authorities. An online COVID-19 platform connects with all 27 national points of contact in Ministries of Defence. The Task Force contributes to the identification of lessons and closely coordinates with the European Commission Directorate for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), including the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). The Task Force also has informal contacts with NATO, including the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC).