Towards a stronger EU on security and defence

Global challenges have not only increased in recent years, they have become more complex, multidimensional and fluid. The EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy presented in June 2016 highlights the strong link between external and EU-internal security under a changing geopolitical setting. No single country can face these emerging threats alone. And when it comes to security the interests of all EU Member States are inseparably linked. Hence the EU is creating conditions which allow Member States to collaborate more closely with each other on defence.

**Why more EU is needed in the field of security and defence?**

This higher level of ambition to work together in the area of defence is a clear response to the demand for security and stability by European citizens and our global partners to be able to react to crises in a fast and effective manner. In short, the EU has to be in a position to look after its own security interests. This approach is also a response to the demand by the majority of 500 million EU citizens, who want more security, stability and a coordinated, EU response to current threats (see also...
the latest Eurobarometer surveys). In this context, defence is just one element of the EU’s unique mix of instruments, crucial to secure European interests today and even more in the future.

**Further equipping the EU’s crisis management toolbox**

The EU and its Member States put in place a set of new measure and tools to increase the effectiveness of their actions, e.g. through new command structures for military training missions or policies to strengthening the civilian dimension of CSDP. At the same time a stronger foundation with new tools and instruments was built to continuously develop and strengthen security and defence capabilities. Cooperation and coordination is thereby at the very heart of the EU’s approach.

The EU must take strategic responsibility to act alone when necessary and with partners whenever possible. This is why the EU strengthens its cooperation with other international partners such as NATO or the UN.

**EU-led military and civilian missions and operations**

The EU currently conducts six military missions and operations on land and sea, to assist in creating a safe and secure environment, fighting pirates or disrupting networks of traffickers. To strengthen coordination and cooperation on the ground a single command centre for EU military training missions (the MPCC), currently conducted in Mali, Somalia and Central African Republic, was established in 2017. Furthermore, the European Peace Facility (EPF) - a new fund outside of the Union’s multi-annual budget - will enable the financing of operational actions under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) that have military or defence implications and thus allow more flexibility and effectiveness of our operations abroad.

But military missions are just one element in the EU’s toolbox of instruments to tackle today’s complex security challenges. There are also ten civilian missions deployed in partner countries to prevent conflicts and to support capacity building in the areas of rule of law and security sector reform. Member States acknowledged the crucial role of civilian CSDP missions to address security challenges, including organised crime, terrorism or hybrid threats and decided in 2018 to further strengthen the civilian dimension of CSDP through resulting in a Civilian Compact.
New framework, tools and instrument to strengthen defence cooperation among Member States

One important example for the progress made is the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). This is a practical EU framework that enables participating Member States to pursue cooperation amongst each other on concrete projects in defence and security. Out of the 28 EU Member States, 25 have joined PESCO and have agreed to binding commitments. So far 34 projects were put forward by a group of Member States and adopted by the Council. The respective Member States now work together concern for example military training and exercises, military capabilities on land, air and sea but also the ever more important area of cyber defence.
The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) is another important part of the EU’s defence
cooperation platform. Member States share their defence spending plans to identify shortfalls, increase coherence and benefit from significant potential gains in effectiveness and cost savings. And through the creation of a European Defence Fund (EDF) the will for the first time co-finance joint research and development of military capabilities. Collectively, Europe is the world’s second largest military spender. The new arrangements will help to develop more effective common capacities and put them to more effective use.

Military mobility is yet another recent achievement based on closer cooperation among EU Member States but also with NATO allies. Be it for the purpose of military exercises, joint training or the preparation for deployments in third countries, mobility of the armed forces of EU Member States is crucial in combining their strengths and in the accomplishment of tasks.

The EU is also taking concrete measures to step up resilience e.g. by improving its capacity to become aware of, analyse and respond to hybrid threats through the Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats or the EU Security and Defence College (ESDC), which launched a cyber platform to boost cyber security capabilities across Europe.

Partnering with NATO for mutual benefit

EU-NATO cooperation constitutes an integral pillar of the EU’s work aimed at strengthening European security and defence, as part of the implementation of the EU Global Strategy. It also contributes to Trans-Atlantic burden sharing. A stronger EU and a stronger NATO are mutually reinforcing.

Against this background both organisations have significantly stepped up their cooperation. Following a Joint Declaration in 2016, common sets of proposals were endorsed by the EU and NATO Councils in December 2016 and 2017. Altogether 74 concrete actions are currently under implementation in various areas with successive progress reports highlighting rapid progress and added value of EU-
NATO cooperation.

**EU-NATO cooperation**

- **Information sharing**
- **Coordinated planning**
- **Concrete cooperation**

In the areas of:

- Hybrid Threats
- Operational cooperation
- Cyber Security
- Capacity building
- Defence capabilities
- Industry and research
- Exercises

*Image available in EN, DE, ES, IT, PL, FR, PT*

**Factsheets**

- [Permanent Structured Cooperation](#) – Deepening Defence Cooperation among EU Member States
- **Defending Europe: European Defence Fund**
  - EU-NATO cooperation  [FR] [DE] [ES] [IT]

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

- **EU Missions and Operations - As part of the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy**

- **EU Civilian CSDP Missions (Civilian Compact) [FR] [DE] [IT] [ES]**

- **EU Battlegroups**

- **The Military Planning and Conduct Capability-MPCC  [FR] [DE] [IT] [ES]**

- **Reinforcing the EU-UN Strategic Partnership on Crisis Management**

- **Timeline on recent events on security and defence**

**Videos**

*Video available in EN, DE, ES, FR, IT*

*Video available in EN, DE, ES, FR, IT*

**Security and defence infographics**
See also

EU Defence historic day: EU ministers agree implementation plan for closer military cooperation
Speech by HRVP Mogherini at European Parliament on EU security and defence (12/12)
EU deepens Defence cooperation, with 25 countries agreeing to prepare 17 projects for Permanent Structured Cooperation (11/12)
EU and NATO cooperation to expand to new areas, including counter-terror; military mobility; women, peace and security (6/12)
Remarks by HR/VP Federica Mogherini at the joint press conference with Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of NATO
Voices from the field: Why investing in security in Somalia matters for Europe (01/12)
Permanent structured cooperation on defence: from words to action (27/11)
The most important moment for European defence in decades - Mogherini (23/11)
Defence cooperation: 23 member states sign joint notification on the Permanent Structured Cooperation (13/11)
Remarks by the HRVP Mogherini at the signing ceremony of the notification by interested Member
States on PESCO (13/11)
Security and defence cooperation: Council highlights the significant progress made (13/11)
Remarks by HRVP Mogherini at the press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council (13/11)
www.eeas.europa.eu

Source URL: