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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From: Political and Security Committee
To: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
Subject: CFSP Report – Our priorities in 2017

1. The Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA) of 2 December 2013, part II, point E, paragraph 25, provides that each year, the High Representative shall consult the European Parliament on a forward-looking document which will set out the main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP.
2. The Nicolaidis Group examined the report and agreed on 26 June 2017 that the PSC should be invited to approve the amended draft report.
3. On 4 July 2017, the Political and Security Committee approved the amended draft report as set out in the annex.
4. In light of the above, Coreper is invited to approve the draft report, with a view to forwarding it to the Council for endorsement.

CFSP Report – Our Priorities in 2017¹

(1) INTRODUCTION

1. 2017 has begun as a year of uncertainty, numerous challenges and on-going conflicts. To the South, instability and fragility persist while, to the East, the European security order continues to be violated. The EU is also confronted with threats such as terrorism, hybrid threats, cyber-attacks, organised crime as well as challenges such as irregular migration and human trafficking.
2. The European Union will continue to address these issues with determination under the leadership of High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini and in close cooperation with Member States and partner countries. The EU continues to stand for its values, with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core, and to actively promote a rules-based global order and respect for Human Rights. In doing so, we will be guided by the Global Strategy on the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, which was presented to the European Council by the HR/VP in June 2016.

¹ This report should be read in conjunction with agreed Council and European Council conclusions.

3. Implementing the Global Strategy will provide the framework for the EU's external relations, including the further development of CFSP and CSDP, for the years to come. In the first half of the year we will continue to focus on taking forward work in five priority areas identified in the Global Strategy and endorsed by the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) in October 2016, namely (i) investing in the resilience of states and societies to the East and South, and an integrated approach to conflicts and crises; (ii) strengthening security and defence; (iii) reinforcing the internal/external policy nexus, with special attention to migration, counter-terrorism and hybrid threats; (iv) updating existing or preparing new regional and thematic strategies; and (v) stepping up public diplomacy efforts. As cross-cutting dimensions within all five building blocks, Human Rights as well as Women, Peace and Security and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment will continue to be mainstreamed into all our policies. The Sustainable Development Goals will be another cross cutting theme for the follow up work.
4. On security and defence, efforts at a more effective and credible cooperation among Member States will further intensify, based on the FAC conclusions of November 2016 defining for the first time a comprehensive level of ambition for the EU in the field of security and defence. This strong political message was confirmed at the highest level in the European Council conclusions of December 2016. On resilience, the HR/VP and the Commission published a Joint Communication on 7 June, aiming to establish a coherent policy framework on the issue across the EU's external action, and to identify key issues at the nexus between internal and external policy.
5. In order to reflect the comprehensive approach, this report includes, when appropriate, references to non-CFSP policies and instruments.

(2) GEOGRAPHICAL

Europe and Central Asia

6. The EU's relations with **Russia** in 2017 will continue to be dominated by Russia's violation of international law in Ukraine, including the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula and destabilisation of eastern Ukraine. The EU remains committed to the policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. The EU's policy on Russia will continue to be guided by the five principles confirmed by the FAC in March 2016 (implementation of the Minsk agreement as the key condition for any substantial change in the EU's stance towards Russia, strengthened relations with Eastern partners and other neighbours, strengthening EU resilience, the possibility of selective engagement with Russia on issues of interest to the EU, and the need to engage in people-to-people contacts and support Russian civil society) and by the European Council conclusions of March 2015 which linked the duration of the restrictive measures against Russia - as adopted on 31 July 2014, enhanced on 8 September 2014 and subsequently amended - to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. The balanced and effective implementation of the principles is in line with the implementation of the Global Strategy. Three of the EU's regimes of restrictive measures (travel ban/asset freeze on individuals and entities; measures related to the annexation of the Crimean peninsula; and economic measures) will be subject to review in the course of 2017. At the same time, the EU will remain committed to maintaining open lines of communication with Russia on international crises, global and other issues that are in the interest of the EU. The EU will not refrain from expressing its concern about the human rights situation in Russia, in particular as regards measures that restrict fundamental freedoms and further restrict space for independent civil society in Russia. The EU stresses the need to challenge Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns in the context of the EU strategic communication efforts.

7. The EU's approach to the Eastern Partnership (EaP) will keep its focus on further developing strong and mutually beneficial relations with all six partners, based on their individual level of ambition in their relations with the EU. This will encompass support for a market economy, sustainable development, good governance, interconnectivity and building the resilience of our partners – at state, economic and societal level - faced with new challenges for their stability, as agreed at the Riga summit of 2015, and set out in the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Global Strategy. The EU will continue its efforts of enhanced strategic communication of the EaP and on ensuring better visibility and outreach for the policy and its outcomes. The next EaP summit, scheduled for end of November 2017 in Brussels, should demonstrate the continued EU commitment for the EaP as well as the maturity of its engagement with its Eastern neighbours, while highlighting its concrete added value for the citizens of both the partner countries and Member States.

8. With regard to individual EaP partners, the application of the Association Agreement, including its trade part, will allow the EU to monitor and support the reform process in **Ukraine**, including through substantial financial assistance. Following the legally binding interpretative decision of EU Heads of State and Government of December 2016, the ratification process of the Association Agreement signed in 2014 will be completed and the Agreement will enter into force. The **EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) to Ukraine** began operations in 2014 and assists the Ukrainian authorities in developing effective, sustainable and accountable civilian security services that contribute to strengthening the rule of law in Ukraine. A strategic review has been prepared and discussed in PSC and relevant Council working committees in early 2017; as a result, the mandate of the mission has been extended until 30 November 2018 and the Operational Plan of the mission is currently being revised.

9. With **Georgia and the Republic of Moldova**, the revision of the Association Agendas will establish the priorities for implementation of the Association Agreements which entered into force last year. The visa liberalisation decisions for Ukraine and Georgia are finalised: the visa-free regime for Georgia entered into force on 28 March 2017, for Ukraine it entered into force on 11 June 2017. The EU will continue to support Georgia's efforts to overcome the consequences of conflict in Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, including through the activities of the EU Monitoring Mission (**EUMM**) and the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia. The EU will continue to support a peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, through participation in the existing negotiations format (5+2) and encouraging all parties to engage proactively to find a viable solution.
10. In relations with those Eastern Partners which do not seek Association Agreements – **Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus** – the EU has proposed alternatives based on common values and fundamental principles for promoting comprehensive cooperation and sustained reform processes. Negotiations on a new agreement are finalised with Armenia and the agreement is expected to be signed soon. Negotiations on a new agreement with Azerbaijan were initiated in February 2017. Partnership Priorities will be agreed jointly to replace the outdated ENP Action Plans and, in the case of Belarus, as the first broadly agreed political document.
- The EU will continue to support the OSCE Minsk Group's role in the peace process of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and encourage Azerbaijan and Armenia to re-engage in negotiations for the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

11. The EU's response to the challenges and opportunities in the **Arctic** will be based on the implementation of the Joint Communication on An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic, released in April 2016.
12. The EU will continue to support the strengthening of the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe** (OSCE) as a platform for cooperation between the participating states, especially aiming at finding a sustainable political solution to protracted conflicts and to crises, notably in Ukraine. The EU highly values and strongly supports the OSCE's work. It emphasizes the need to fully implement the existing commitments in all three dimensions. Given the changes in the security environment, as well as technological developments in the military sphere, the EU deems necessary a substantial update and modernisation of politico-military instruments in the framework of the OSCE. It is especially important in the context of the structured dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area which was launched in Vienna in December 2016.
13. In **Central Asia**, the EU is focusing on promoting good governance and economic development to strengthen resilience, security and stability in the region, in line with the EU Strategy for Central Asia. The EU also aims to promote Europe-Asia connectivity. In addition, the European Union strives to promote further cooperation in the education sector, water and environment issues and rule of law, as well as enhanced protection of human rights. There is an established strong institutional relationship manifested by the EU-Central Asia High-Level Political and Security Dialogue (latest meeting on 8 June 2017, in Kyrgyzstan) and the EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting (the next meeting in autumn 2017 in Uzbekistan) that shall be further streamlined and connected and could lead to further cooperation in the area of security, including countering terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism.

14. The future of the **Western Balkans** is within the European Union. The enlargement and Stabilisation and Association processes, with their support for reforms and good neighbourly relations, as well as with the established conditionality, represents a strategic investment in the peace, democracy, prosperity, security and stability in Europe. In 2017, the overall priority is to take forward the European perspective of the region in order to enhance its resilience and thus, in line with the Global Strategy, the security of the EU itself. The EU remains committed to the European perspective of the region and to support the EU-oriented reforms and projects, in particular focusing on further strengthening institutions, good governance and the rule of law; fostering good neighbourly relations and inclusive regional cooperation, while paying due attention to divisive rhetoric; mitigating stability risks from political polarization and promoting socio-economic development.

Throughout 2017, attention will focus on addressing the following political stability and security factors: continuing to facilitate normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina, mitigating stability risks from political polarisation and supporting reforms in Kosovo*, supporting the new government in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the reform process and in addressing risk from political polarisation, fostering Bosnia and Herzegovina's socio-economic development and strengthening rule of law, consolidating Serbia's and Montenegro's European perspective, further strengthening reform and the rule of law in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia. The EU will strengthen dialogue with the Western Balkans on further deepening cooperation on foreign policy and defence issues and progressive alignment with the EU's foreign policy positions.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) and the Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

The mandate of the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) in Kosovo has been extended until June 2018. A Concept of Transition to transfer some Mentoring, Monitoring and Advising tasks from EULEX to the EU Office in Kosovo in June 2018 has been discussed in relevant Council groups and committees and work will continue based on a Strategic Review on EULEX to be presented in the autumn 2017. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU military operation EUFOR ALTHEA's presence on the ground remains an important contribution to stability and security in the country. EUFOR continues to support efforts to maintain a Safe and Secure Environment (SASE) and conducts capacity-building and training of the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to contribute to their professionalism and the country's stability. A strategic review on EUFOR ALTHEA will be produced in the autumn of 2017.

15. The EU will remain vigilant with regard to the Western Balkans/Eastern Mediterranean route. To help address migration issues on the Western Balkans/Eastern Mediterranean route, close coordination and cooperation with the countries of the region will need to continue throughout 2017, including follow-up of assistance provided to manage borders, improve reception capacities, stem irregular migration and fight smuggling networks. The implementation of the collective, cross-border measures, based on cooperation and fully respecting the refugees' rights, while also recalling their obligations, which were agreed at the October 2015 Leaders Meeting need to continue. The frequent and regular contacts between the main EU and Western Balkan stakeholders addressing the issue ensure effective coordination and help enable timely responses to evolving needs. Contingency planning regarding alternative migration routes will need to be in place in all affected Western Balkan countries and continuous monitoring in particular through EU Agencies is a priority in order to curtail possible further development of the smuggling operations in the region.

16. The EU remains committed to working together with a democratic, inclusive and stable **Turkey** to address our common challenges. The EU has strongly condemned the coup attempt of 15 July 2016. However, the scale and nature of the follow-up measures taken by the Turkish authorities remain a source of grave concern and call for an effective redress mechanism. As a candidate country, Turkey is expected to uphold the highest standards of democracy, including respect for human rights, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and the right of all to a fair trial.

The implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement agreed on 18 March 2016 remains a priority and the European Union sticks to its commitment, notably to provide support to refugees in Turkey through the Facility for Refugees. The EU-Turkey Statement has contributed to tangible results in putting the irregular migration influx under control and in preventing loss of life at sea. However, further efforts are needed from both sides to ensure the full implementation of the Statement.

In 2017 we will continue, post the 16 April referendum on constitutional changes, our engagement with Turkey, in the many areas where we have important joint interests, such as the counter-terrorism dialogue as well as the increased pace of political dialogues on foreign policy issues. There is an urgent need to further develop human rights-compliant counter-terrorism cooperation with Turkey, in close partnership with the Council of Europe, which may also have a positive impact on the visa liberalisation process. In this context, the full end effective implementation of the visa road-map vis-à-vis all Member States is recalled.

The EU takes note of the preparatory work by the Commission for draft negotiating directives for an upgrading of the EU-Turkey Customs Union, without prejudice to Member States' position.

Turkey needs to commit itself unequivocally to good neighbourly relations and to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter; having recourse, if necessary, to the International Court of Justice. In this context, the EU expresses once again serious concern and urges Turkey to avoid any kind of threat or action directed against a Member State, or source of friction or actions, which damage good neighbourly relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Moreover, the EU stresses again all the sovereign rights of EU Member States. This includes, inter alia, the right to enter into bilateral agreements and to explore and exploit natural resources in accordance with the EU acquis and international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and also stresses the need to respect the sovereignty of Member States over their territorial sea and airspace. Turkey is urged to show restraint and to respect Cyprus' sovereignty over its territorial sea and Cyprus' sovereign rights in its exclusive economic zone.

Turkey, despite repeated calls, continues refusing to fulfil its obligation of full, non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement towards all Member States, the fulfilment of which could provide a positive impulse to the negotiation process. In the absence of progress on this issue, including Turkey's restrictions as regards the Republic of Cyprus, the EU will maintain its measures from 2006, which will have a continuous effect on the overall progress of the negotiations. Furthermore, Turkey has still not made progress towards the necessary normalisation of its relations with the Republic of Cyprus. The EU recalls its position on accession of EU Member States to international organisation.

The EU expects Turkey to actively support the negotiations aimed at a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus problem within the UN framework, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles on which the European Union is founded. Turkey's commitments and contribution to such a comprehensive settlement remains crucial.

17. The EU is closely connected to, and has excellent relations with, the **non-EU Western European countries**, Switzerland and Norway being among the EU's main trade and investment partners. Bilateral relations with Switzerland and European Economic Area (EEA) countries will be further strengthened, both as regards the internal market but also in other key areas such as energy, climate change or migration. As regards Switzerland, the main objectives are to finalise negotiations on an institutional framework for the complex system of existing agreements, and to closely monitor national implementing legislation related to the law approved on 16 December 2016 following the popular vote against the free movement of persons in 2014. The objective is to further foreign policy co-operation and dialogue with all non-EU Western European countries, including the Holy See. Negotiations will intensify on Association Agreement(s) with Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, with the aim of their full participation in the EU's internal market.

Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

18. In line with the Global Strategy, the EU will contribute to the security of the Union and to strengthening the stability of the MENA region through a number of interrelated actions and processes. As part of an integrated approach using all EU instruments, these focus on crisis management, conflict resolution and prevention, countering terrorism and violent extremism, protection of Human Rights and improved governance and sustainable economic growth, as well as science diplomacy actions. They also include support to regional peace initiatives and the search for a two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The EU will remain committed to, and supportive of, the UN-led processes towards finding a peaceful solution to the crises in Syria, Yemen and Libya.

19. Chief among the numerous challenges in the region, not least because of its direct impact on the European Union itself, is the ongoing conflict in **Syria**. The EU has adopted a new strategy for Syria on 3 April 2017 and hosted and co-chaired together with the United Nations, Germany, Kuwait, Norway, Qatar and the UK, an international Ministerial conference involving all key actors in Brussels on 5 April 2017, following up to the Kuwait and London conferences. The conference underlined the EU's position as a key political player and leading donor, accounting for two thirds of the EUR 5.6 billion generated in pledges for 2017 to respond to the continued suffering of Syrians in Syria and in neighbouring host countries.

20. In **Libya**, the EU will continue its support to the political stabilisation process including by supporting the internationally recognised Government of National Accord and the Presidency Council, while promoting a constructive UN-led dialogue with different Libyan parties to ensure a peaceful resolution of the security and political crisis within the framework of the Libya Political Agreement (LPA); in this sense, the EU will also further enhance its engagement with neighbouring countries and regional organisations within the framework of the Quartet for Libya. The EU notes the continued threat of terrorism in Libya, and urgent need to unite all armed forces under the control of the legitimate civilian authorities as set out in the LPA to ensure stability and preserve the country's unity and territorial integrity. Furthermore, in order to prevent and discourage irregular migration flows across the Central Mediterranean and to avoid further loss of lives at sea, in the desert, and in the hands of traffickers, the EU will take additional action along the Central Mediterranean route as a follow up to the Joint Communication adopted by the Commission and the HR/VP and the Malta Declaration. Cooperation with countries of origin and transit shall be reinforced in order to stem the migratory pressure on Libya's and other neighbouring countries' land borders. A key objective remains breaking the business model of smugglers, by stepping up work with Libya as the main country of departure as well as with Libya's North African and sub-Saharan neighbours.
21. This is already the focus of our work in the Maghreb and Mediterranean, with **EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA**. As well as contributing to the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks, the operation will continue to conduct activities on the supporting tasks of providing capacity and training to the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy and contributing to information sharing and the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya (on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 2357 (2017)). Civilian operational planning continues by the EU Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya (**EUBAM Libya**) to identify potential options for civilian CSDP engagement as regards to policing, criminal justice and border security, on the basis of Libyan ownership. EUBAM is currently working towards establishing a light presence in Tripoli. Opportunities to assist in the consolidation of Libyan security structures are being actively sought and will be supported as appropriate.

22. In the context of a stalled **Middle East Peace Process**, the EU, including through the EU Special Representative's mandate, and in line with relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including most recently resolution 2334 (2016), will continue to reinforce its engagement with the parties and international partners to create a new dynamic conducive to negotiations. The EU reiterates its firm commitment to the two-state solution and its existing policies, as set out in its successive Council conclusions, and its concerns about the growing threats to that solution. The EU recalls that settlements are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible, and reiterates its strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in this context, such as demolitions and confiscation, including of EU funded projects. The EU is deeply concerned that the continuing cycle of violence has led to a serious loss of human life in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. The EU firmly condemns the terror attacks and violence from all sides and in any circumstances, including the death of children. The EU will continue to work within the Quartet and with other stakeholders in the region to ensure a robust multilateral framework. In this context, the high-level Conference in Paris on 15 January 2017 brought together 70 Foreign Ministers and delegates, including HR/VP Mogherini. It stressed the need for a two-state solution and rejected unilateral moves to prejudice permanent status issues. The Conference sent a strong message of support to the two-state solution from the international community. The EU reaffirms its proposal of an unprecedented package of political, economic and security support to be offered to and developed with both parties in the context of a final status agreement.

23. In the Middle East, the EU Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories (**EUPOL COPPS**) continues to assist the Palestinian Authority in building the institutions of a future State of Palestine in the areas of policing and criminal justice. The EU Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point (**EUBAM RAFAH**), currently located in Tel Aviv, with a standby operational capacity to provide a third-party presence at the Rafah Crossing Point as part of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA agreement) forms part of the confidence-building measures between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Both missions have been subject to a comprehensive strategic review in early 2017 and, in spite of the increased tensions in the region and the stalled Middle East Peace Process, Member States have agreed to their extension until June 2018. The revised Operational Plans for both missions have been discussed and endorsed by the relevant Council working committees.
24. In **Iraq**, the EU will help the Iraqi federal government meet the critical challenges it will face in the wake of the hoped-for military defeat of Da'esh. Specific support to Iraqi security structures will be further explored and integrated as appropriate, including the setting up of an EU Security Sector Reform Advise and Assist Team, which is currently being discussed in the relevant Council working committees. Security dialogues will continue with countries in the region, and will focus on enhancing joint action to fight terrorism through a comprehensive approach involving both security and civil measures that are in accord with the protection of human rights. The EU will maintain its commitment to **Tunisia's** democratic transition and strengthen its support as foreseen in the Joint Communication of September 2016 and the FAC Conclusions of October 2016. The EU will build on the adoption of the Partnership Priorities and visit of the HR/VP to Algiers to take forward the relationship with **Algeria**. Expanding the privileged partnership with **Morocco** with the new government will be a priority in 2017. The implementation of ENP partnership priorities will be initiated with a number of countries of the Southern Mediterranean, including with key partners in the region such as **Jordan** and **Lebanon**. This will take full account of the priorities outlined in the Global Strategy, including a strong focus on support for civil society.

25. Dialogue and cooperation with **Gulf Cooperation Council** (GCC) countries will be stepped up, notably as concerns common security interests and possible joint action to boost economic resilience in the Southern neighbourhood. To the same end, wherever feasible, joint programming of assistance with Member States will be pursued. However, the dispute engaging several countries in the region, started on the 5th June 2017, could have a detrimental effect on intra-GCC relations and regional stability. The EU will continue to work with all parties in order to avoid further escalation and will support all mediation efforts. In **Yemen**, the ongoing conflict is having devastating consequences for the country and its population, with a catastrophic humanitarian situation coupled with a significant cholera outbreak. The EU will continue its strong support to the efforts of the UN Secretary General and the UN Special Envoy for Yemen to achieve a resumption of negotiations. It will continue to urge all parties to the conflict to react in a flexible and constructive manner and without preconditions to their efforts.
26. On the regional front, the EU will deepen its exchanges with the **League of Arab States** (LAS) and the **Union for the Mediterranean** building on the positive steps taken in 2016 and early 2017. With the joint EU-LAS Ministerial declaration of December 2016 in mind, the EU will work towards the holding of a first Euro-Arab summit in 2018.
27. This agenda is evidently sensitive to the changing international environment. The region is also especially unpredictable, and unforeseen events such as a new conflict or migration/refugee crises could also affect progress. Political disputes within the LAS may derail work on the Euro-Arab summit.

Iran

28. 16 January 2017 marked the first anniversary of the Implementation Day of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the EU/E3+3 and Iran, a multilateral agreement endorsed by the UN Security Council. The EU continues to play a key role through the HR/VP's coordination of the Joint Commission established to oversee implementation of the agreement. The EU and its Member States have repeatedly expressed their resolute commitment to the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA throughout its lifetime. The EU will continue to advocate this position with all partners as clearly stated in the November 2016 FAC Council Conclusions on Iran. The year 2017 will be critical for the agreement which, if fully implemented, ensures the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. The EU will closely monitor developments and engage all JCPOA parties to ensure that commitments are respected by all sides. The EU will also keep working closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is tasked with monitoring and verifying Iran's nuclear obligations.
29. Bilateral engagement between the EU and Iran will develop, based on the Joint Statement of the HR/VP and the Iranian Foreign Minister of 16 April 2016 which sets the ground for cooperation across a number of areas. Concrete projects and cooperation will gradually expand in 2017 on trade and economic areas, energy, environment and climate change, humanitarian issues, education and research. Furthermore, discussions are expected to be continued on human rights and a comprehensive dialogue on migration is planned to be launched. Regional issues, in particular, developments in Syria will continue to be addressed at all levels.

Africa

30. 2017 will be a challenging year for Africa, against the backdrop of a modest forecast for continental economic growth. But it will also be a year of opportunity for the EU-Africa partnership, with many occasions to reaffirm and enhance engagement at bilateral, regional and continental level. The EU's engagement with Africa will focus on the preparations for the fifth **Africa-EU summit** (Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, end of November 2017). The 10 year anniversary of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) is a good opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved so far and to redefine the strategic priorities for a strengthened engagement over the next years in order to meet the new challenges the two continents are facing. The EU will continue working with the African Union (AU) Commission and will pursue a political dialogue at ministerial level. Under an overarching theme of youth, the EU will engage with the AU, regional organisations and bilateral African partners, including civil society organisations and the private sector, to develop the environment that would foster investment and job creation with the needs and ambitions of a young population in mind. Collaboration between African and European researchers and innovators in fields such as food and nutrition security, sustainable agriculture, climate change and sustainable energy will further be promoted. Engagement in the field of international peace and security will also deserve special attention, and in particular further support to the African Peace and Security Architecture.

31. With persisting security vulnerabilities linked to violent extremism, piracy, terrorist attacks and organized crime, work on the comprehensive implementation of the **regional strategies** and **action plans** for the Sahel, Gulf of Guinea and the Horn of Africa will continue, in a joint effort. Contributing to regional and international efforts for peace and stability – particularly in Mali and Somalia, which are fundamental for the stability of their wider regions - will remain a key priority in 2017. Efforts will continue to consolidate progress and to foster reconciliation in the Central African Republic and to avoid the outbreak of large scale violence in South Sudan by bringing the parties back to a political process. Increased attention will be paid to addressing security and migration-related challenges in Sahel and Northern Africa (particularly Libya); exploring and enhancing cross-regional synergies and cooperation between the Horn of Africa and Gulf countries in areas such as security, economic development and addressing migration; and boosting the effectiveness of regional action in addressing the challenges faced by countries in the Lake Chad Basin, including the fight against Boko Haram. Sustained work with the G5 Sahel will remain a priority, confirmed also in the context of the ministerial dialogue. The issue of maritime security will need to be closely monitored, in the light of the alarming trends of piracy and armed robbery at sea (including "kidnap for ransom" events) in particular off the Nigerian coasts. Finally, in the Great Lakes the EU will continue to use the instruments at its disposal to support international efforts to resolve the crises in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, allowing a resumption of longer term efforts at development and regional integration.

32. Efforts to draw together the impact of the several CSDP Missions and operations currently *in situ* in Africa are progressing, with the agreement of Member States for the launching of the first phase of the regionalisation of CSDP in the Sahel region. CSDP operations and missions cover a broad range of activities and competencies. CSDP features in the EU's efforts to work with partners towards the common goal of tackling irregular migration at source and in transit countries in the Sahel. Stability in the Sahel region is enhanced through CSDP missions in Mali and Niger (**EUCAP Sahel Mali**, **EUTM Mali**, **EUCAP Sahel Niger**) in close cooperation with host governments. In early 2017, the EU compound in Agadez was completed, hosting the EUCAP-Sahel Niger antenna and an EU Office supporting development activities. The strengthening of an integrated approach in the region builds on efforts under CSDP (e.g. training and capacity-building) and goes hand in hand with the strengthening of coordination between CSDP missions in the Sahel and projects financed under other EU instruments such as the EU Trust Fund for Africa and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, in particular those Member States' projects in the region which will be an integral part of this approach including in the context of the initiative for capacity building in support of security and development (CBSD). The **CSDP regional approach in Sahel** is in line with the emphasis in the Global Strategy on strengthening cross border cooperation in the face of complex issues that increasingly require a regional approach. The aim is to extend training and advisory support for security and defence forces to G-5 Sahel countries, with particular emphasis on cross border cooperation, using as a starting point current deployments in Mali and Niger. The EU CSDP Military Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUMAM RCA), an advisory mission that was launched in the spring of 2015, was replaced by the EU CSDP Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic (**EUTM RCA**) on 16 July 2016, demonstrating the strong EU commitment

to restoring peace and stability in the country. It is anticipated that of the six total battalions mandated to the mission to train over its four years, two should be fully trained by the end of 2017. Military engagement exists on the seas off the Horn of Africa (**Operation ATALANTA**) countering piracy to great effect and on land with the Somalia Training Mission (**EUTM Somalia**), based in Mogadishu, developing the capacity of the Somalian National Army. **EUCAP Somalia** is a civilian mission headquartered in Mogadishu and with elements in Nairobi focused on Somali maritime civilian law-enforcement. Further enhancement of the EU's engagement in the security sector in Somalia is being considered in order to empower National structures in advance of AMISOM's draw-down. AMISOM has been supported by the EU since 2007 and remains critical to securing Somalia's security. Coordinated international support for its transition to Somali security forces beyond 2018 will be paramount to the return of security in the whole country.

33. The EU will continue to work together with regional and international partners with regards to **democratic consolidation, promotion and protection of human rights** and to prevent further violence in the more fragile countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Guinea Bissau. Contentious political processes in the past years, e.g. Burundi, Gabon and The Gambia, have strained our political dialogue, further highlighting the need for increased investment in the long term consolidation of rule of law and democratic governance. The EU will continue to follow closely upcoming electoral processes, deploying electoral observers for a number of elections during 2017. The EU will continue to manage relations in a way which is consistent with the essential elements of the Cotonou Agreement and which responds to each specific context.

34. Increased attention will be paid to promoting the **economic and investment aspects** of relations with Africa. Efforts to have the Economic Partnership Agreements with West Africa and the countries of the Southern African Development Community and the East African Community signed, ratified and implemented will continue. Strong business-to-business interaction and investment promotion components will be built into bilateral political dialogue. The External Investment Plan will start being implemented.
35. Sustained efforts to implement the outcome of the Valletta Summit on Migration (November 2015) will be continued in a comprehensive manner and covering all aspects of **migration**. Increased dialogue and cooperation will be pursued with countries of origin, transit and destination, in the framework of the Valletta, Rabat and Khartoum processes, and bilaterally, including in the context of the Partnership Framework, to address root causes of migration and forced displacement, to facilitate legal migration - while respecting EU and national competences, to prevent and discourage irregular migration, to prevent and fight migrant smuggling and to eradicate trafficking in human beings, to reinforce international protection, and to improve return, readmission and reintegration. In parallel, those efforts will be consistently pursued jointly with African countries and financed in the framework of the implementation of the EU Trust Fund for Africa.
36. **Ministerial dialogues** notably with Nigeria, Ethiopia, Angola and Cape Verde will step up EU's engagement with these partners. A summit with South Africa (the first since 2013), also marking 10 years of strategic partnership with the EU, would cement the bilateral relationship and could give a particularly healthy boost to economic engagement. The EU will continue to build on the ministerial dialogues with regional organisations (e.g. Economic Community of West African States/ECOWAS, Southern Africa Development Community/SADC, Intergovernmental Authority on Development/IGAD) in order to make progress on the implementation of the joint trade and investment agendas and enhance joint contribution to peace, stability and democratisation processes in the regions concerned.

37. EU's strategic reflection on EU-**ACP** relations after 2020 will reach a turning point in autumn 2017, with discussions expected to start on an EU proposal for the future framework and long-term priorities.

Americas

38. The **transatlantic relationship** is the single-most important partnership for the EU and its Member States to address key global challenges. It remains indispensable for global peace, security and prosperity. 2017 will be devoted to building relations with the US administration and the Congress in order to continue the close cooperation and coordination with the US. The EU will give specific emphasis to continued close cooperation on the key foreign policy challenges including *inter alia* Syria, Libya, counter-terrorism and monitoring the implementation of the JCPOA with Iran, developments in Ukraine and Russia. The strong EU-US bilateral cooperation in security and defence, complementing EU-NATO cooperation, will be further helped by the recently adopted administrative arrangement between the EU Military Staff and the US European Command, and by the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, signed in December 2016, to provide mutual logistical assistance in operational situations.
39. The EU-**Canada** strategic partnership is based on shared common values, a long history of close cooperation and strong people-to-people ties. The signature of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) at the EU-Canada Summit held in Brussels on 30 October 2016 marked the beginning of a new, even more dynamic, chapter in EU-Canada relations. In 2017, the emphasis will be put on the implementation of upgraded policy and sectoral dialogues through the SPA. These include foreign policy, security, energy and development. The signature of the EU-Canada Security of Information Agreement (SIA) is foreseen for 2017. The implementation of this agreement will facilitate military-to-military cooperation substantively.

40. The EU will continue to strengthen its strategic partnership with **Latin America and the Caribbean** at bilateral, sub-regional and regional level. The region's importance for the EU is constantly increasing – as a mature market for goods and investment, as a like-minded partner for global challenges and as the provider of success stories in building resilient societies in the face of severe security and social challenges. As none of these are self-evident, the EU will engage in all these aspects: strengthen those who defend free trade, fair competition and open markets and those who promote the rule of law, associated with the fight against drug cartels and illicit trafficking, encourage peaceful solutions to internal conflicts and socially sound economic policies.
41. In 2017, the EU will aim at pursuing negotiations with **MERCOSUR** on the bi-regional Association Agreement, a landmark initiative to deepen our relations with the region. With **Mexico**, a strategic partner and an important multilateral player, the EU will continue negotiations to upgrade the existing agreement, which will provide the even wider framework for strengthened cooperation. The EU's objective is also to start negotiations on modernised Association Agreement with **Chile** as soon as possible. The current discussions on the **post-Cotonou** arrangement, important for the Caribbean, will also have to be factored in.

42. Putting in practice, as soon as possible, the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement signed with **Cuba** will be among the main priorities for the coming year. In **Colombia** the EU will continue to play a leading role in supporting the peace process and contributing to peace building efforts, particularly through the Columbia EU Trust Fund. In recognition of its commitment, the EU has been given an accompanying role in the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement signed on 24 November 2016, in the areas of rural development, reincorporation of demobilised FARC members and child soldiers, and assistance to the new Prosecutors Office to fight organised crime. In 2017, the Special Envoy of the High Representative, Mr Eamon Gilmore, will continue to play a key role in coordinating the overall response. In **Haiti**, the EU will continue its support to improve the internal situation, notably recovery efforts after Hurricane Matthew hit the country in October 2016. As the political polarisation and the socio-economic situation deteriorate in **Venezuela**, the EU will pursue, together with main international partners, its support to peaceful democratic solutions based on meaningful dialogue and respect for rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those of jailed political opponents. In the meantime, the EU continues to explore all available possibilities for a scaling up of the assistance contributing to address the most urgent needs of the population and the need to protect European citizens.
43. Some important events will mark 2017 in the region. The summit between the EU and the Community of Latin America and the Caribbean States (**CELAC**) at the end of October in El Salvador will constitute a unique opportunity to foster our relations with a like-minded and changing region, both politically and economically. It will also be the occasion to assess the progress in the EU's enhanced relations with regional organisations in the Caribbean and Central America, focusing on security, economic development and climate change. An EU-Brazil summit has also been set for October this year.

44. In addition, EU cooperation with Latin American countries on **CSDP and security and defence issues** has evolved significantly, particularly in the recent few years. Chile and Colombia signed a Framework Participation Agreement (FPA) with the EU in 2014 aiming at facilitating their respective participation in EU-led crisis management operations. Furthermore, dialogue on CSDP issues has been initiated with further Latin American countries. These include Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, which expressed an interest in deepening dialogue and cooperation with the EU in the area of security and defence, including on the basis of a possible FPA.

Asia-Pacific

45. In **East Asia**, the EU intends to further deepen relations with such strategic partners as Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK), which face important security and stability challenges that have direct and indirect implications for the EU. The EU remains fully committed to a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) and a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Japan and aims to improve coordination of sector policy dialogues between the EU and Japan through the Joint Committee established through the SPA. The EU and Japan are enhancing their security partnership: Japan is already providing concrete support to EU crisis management missions in Africa, and the two sides have carried out a number of joint counter-piracy exercises in the West Indian Ocean. The EU-ROK Framework Participation Agreement allows for a framework for joint crisis management operations, and the EU welcomes the ROK's participation to EU's counter-piracy efforts off the Horn of Africa, notably in the EU-led Atalanta operation.

46. As regards **China**, the EU will focus on the implementation of its new China strategy adopted on 18 July 2016, an ambitious document stating that the EU's engagement with China will be principled, practical and pragmatic, staying true to its interests and values, in particular adherence to international rules and norms, and respect for human rights. In the China strategy, the EU reaffirmed its support to the continued implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle in Hong Kong and Macao and to a "one-China" policy. The conclusion of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with **Mongolia** in the coming months will enhance EU-Mongolian cooperation. For 2017, the main objective for the EU will be to provide an adequate and broad package of supportive measures (including maintaining the level of development assistance, increasing EU presence on the ground), given an acute economic and financial crisis in Mongolia ahead of several large external debt repayments due in 2017.

47. In **South Asia**, the EU foresees to follow-up on the political and financial commitments made at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, to implement the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development with Afghanistan and to finalise and launch a new EU-Afghanistan Strategy. The EU remains engaged in supporting the civilian security sector through financial support – EUR 320 million per year, mainly to the Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan (LOTFA) until 2020 – and through the Office of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) with deployed security sector reform (SSR) experts until August 2017; arrangements to support civilian policing will continue. The EU will further strengthen the EU-India Strategic Partnership by implementing the March 2016 summit outcomes including the EU-India Agenda for Action, and the EU is committed to strengthening the partnership with India across the board, particularly on foreign policy, security (counter-terrorism, cyber etc.), military contacts and global issues. The EU also envisages finalising and launching a new Strategic Engagement Plan with Pakistan and working on full implementation of the EU-Pakistan Readmission Agreement. It intends to work with the Government of Nepal towards consolidating the country's peace process. As regards Bangladesh, cooperation will also encompass countering violent extremism, counterterrorism and radicalisation. Furthermore, the EU envisages further strengthening cooperation on migration with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, and expects these partners to deliver on return and readmission arrangements.

48. As regards **South-East Asia**, the EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will mark the 40th anniversary of their relations in 2017. Further progress will be made in developing strategic level relations with ASEAN, in follow-up to the Joint Communication on relations with ASEAN, welcomed by the Council in June 2015. The ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting (AEMM) of October 2016 reconfirmed the value of new areas of cooperation (e.g. maritime security, launch of negotiations on a region-to-region civil aviation agreement to enhance connectivity), identified new domains for increased cooperation (for instance the establishment of an EU-ASEAN High-Level Dialogue on the Sustainable Development Goals). The EU will actively pursue the participation in all ASEAN-led processes in the region, in particular in all security-oriented fora, including the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting - Plus. The EU remains committed to establishing a Strategic Partnership with ASEAN and to supporting ASEAN's integration process, including by providing funding and policy advice. The EU will continue to implement the Joint Communication by the HR/VP and the Commission on Myanmar/Burma and the related Council conclusions of June 2016. EU-Indonesia relations advanced considerably in 2016. A regular strategic ministerial dialogue with Indonesia has been launched. FTA negotiations are underway and the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement is under implementation. November 2016 witnessed the organisation of the first EU-Indonesia Joint Committee under the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement; the EU will maintain a high level of engagement with Indonesia.
49. In **Oceania**, the EU envisages raising the EU's profile and presence in the Pacific, continuing the strategic reflection on the EU-ACP relations after 2020. The EU also foresees launching of FTA negotiations with Australia and New Zealand and the implementation of the Framework Agreements with Australia and New Zealand.

50. The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) continues to be an important platform where Asia and Europe discuss common challenges with the objective to foster greater connectivity between the two regions. There is a general consensus among ASEM members that the productivity of ASEM dialogue should be enhanced through engagement on key areas of global concern such as shared security challenges, climate change, counter-terrorism and cyber.
51. The 9th EU-China Summit took place on 1-2 June 2017 and the 24th EU-Japan Summit took place on 6 July 2017. An EU-India Summit is foreseen after the summer, a possible EU-Pakistan Summit by the end of the year. The Pacific Island Forum is foreseen for September 2017. The 24th ASEAN Regional Forum and Post-ministerial meeting with ASEAN will take place in Manila in August 2017 and the ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting in Myanmar on 20-21 November 2017.
52. The EU will continue to monitor developments and, when need be, take appropriate action regarding the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** in terms of its nuclear, other WMD and ballistic missile programmes and human rights concerns. The EU's priorities for 2017 will be to ensure full implementation of the existing UN Security Council Resolutions on DPRK, in particular resolutions 2321 (2016) and 2270 (2016), as well as the full and timely transposition of any further UN Security Council Resolutions. The EU will continue to make clear its explicit condemnation of the DPRK's continued pursuit of its illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, and further calls for the DPRK to return to meaningful and credible dialogue towards denuclearisation.

53. Some advances on human rights and a review of the legislative framework in **Myanmar/Burma** led to the discontinuation in 2016 of the EU sponsored UN General Assembly resolution on human rights. Nevertheless, the outbreak of violence in Rakhine State resulted in the EU calling for the urgent resumption of aid programmes, humanitarian and media access in Northern Rakhine State, and sponsoring a resolution in the 34th session of the Human Rights Council, which set up a Fact-Finding Mission. Return to civilian rule in **Thailand** is likely to slip into 2018 as elections which according to the government were originally scheduled for 2017 are likely to be delayed. The traditionally close **EU-Philippines** relations have come under strain as a result of the high number of killings related to the fight against drug crime and the possible reintroduction of the death penalty.

(3) GLOBAL ISSUES

54. In 2017 external aspects of **migration** will continue to be the top priority for the EU. The EU reaffirms its commitment to a comprehensive and geographically balanced approach on migration. We have the responsibility to address the opportunities and challenges of migration and mobility which must be shared in a fair manner between countries of origin, transit and destination, while respecting EU and national competences. Two overall strands of work will be of particular importance. First and foremost, continued implementation of the Partnership Framework remains central. This goes in terms of continued engagement with the five priority countries in sub-Saharan Africa, but also in terms of fully exploiting the spirit of the Partnership Framework in our migration-engagement in the Central Mediterranean, the Middle East, and countries in North Africa and Asia. Secondly, following last year's UN General Assembly Summit on Movements of Refugees and Migrations, the EU will continue the efforts to ensure an ambitious follow-up to the New York Declaration, concerning both the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact for Refugees (to be developed by the end of 2018). Follow up on the Council Conclusions on Protracted Forced Displacement, especially with regards to working towards peaceful solutions to conflict, will complement this strand of work.

55. Against a background of ever more complex global challenges, efforts to promote change and reform in the ways the **United Nations** works to be able to tackle the conflicts, threats and megatrends of today will be stepped up. In line with its Global Strategy, the EU will defend and promote multilateralism and human rights at a time of increasing uncertainty. The 72nd UN General Assembly beginning in September 2017 will provide an opportunity to project EU priorities. The EU will mobilise support for the new Secretary-General and his determination to ensure the UN delivers across all pillars: peace and security, human rights and development. This will include inter alia reform efforts and preventive diplomacy.
56. As UN processes such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have shifted from negotiation to implementation, the EU will lead efforts to drive ahead with global implementation of **concrete commitments**. The world can continue to count on the EU for leadership in the global fight against **climate change** and on its commitment to swiftly and fully implement the Paris agreement. The EU is strengthening its existing global partnerships to this end and will continue to seek new alliances, from the world's largest economies to the most vulnerable island states.
57. The security/development nexus will be particularly important under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies". Key policy initiatives launched in 2016 on Sustainable Europe, the EU Consensus on Development and the European External Investment Plan will be finalised. The EEAS will pursue outreach and devise actions to ensure that the effort is collective, in productive partnership with states and actors from all regions of the world including at the High Level Forum of July 2017. The EU will continue its work on Ocean diplomacy considering the outcome of the UN Ocean Conference (5-9 June 2017) and subsequently hosting the Our Ocean conference in October 2017 in Malta.

58. The EU action in **promoting human rights and supporting democracy** worldwide will continue to be based on the implementation of the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. A mid-term review of the Action Plan was prepared. Support for civil society space, freedom of association and expression and human rights defenders will remain a key priority as will children's rights and the prevention of torture and ill-treatment. The EU will remain committed to the promotion of the freedom of religion or belief while being particularly focused on the protection of the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities. It will unequivocally condemn the indiscriminate and atrocious attacks against them. The EU will further strengthen its support to, and promotion of, the International Criminal Court (ICC) as well as focus in particular on migration. As regards EU support to security structures, including through CSDP missions and operations, further steps will be taken to develop a due diligence policy. At the multilateral level, the EU will continue to advocate the universality of human rights, working in particular through the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council. Supporting democracy worldwide through the preparation and deployment of EU elections observation missions (EOM) and election expert missions (EEM) in agreed priority countries will be high priority for 2017. The promotion of the effective implementation of EOMs recommendations, including through the deployment of election follow-up missions, and finalisation of the compilation of best practices on the follow up to EOM recommendations will be a concrete deliverable.

59. **Equality between women and men** is a fundamental value of the EU guaranteed by the Treaties. The EU promotes all synergies and the need for coherence between the Women in Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and other relevant UN and EU policy frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, UN Security Council Resolution 2272 (2016) on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, the Global Strategy, as well as other EU strategies, guidelines, action plans, tools and financing instruments.

The WPS agenda covers all aspects of "gender and conflict" and aims to ensure that the rights, agency and protection of women and girls are observed and upheld before, during and after conflict, and that the role of women in decision-making is enhanced at all stages of the conflict continuum and in the implementation of peace agreements, making it relevant to the full spectrum of aspects of foreign and security policy.

The WPS agenda is universally applicable and, therefore, must be implemented in the EU domestically as well as externally. The effective implementation of the internal dimension of the WPS agenda at EU Member States' national, as well as at EU level, is also a central prerequisite to EU internal-external coherence. In 2017 the EU will continue to strengthen its effective implementation of the WPS agenda and to integrate gender equality across all its policies and strategies, as indicated in the Global Strategy. We will build on enhancing our targeted cooperation with the UN and with all national, regional and international partners. Furthermore, the EU will continue to promote the integration of the gender perspective into the analysis, planning and conduct and the strategic reviews of CSDP operations and missions, and of its diplomatic/political activities, in order to support the meaningful, equitable and transversal empowerment of women, as critical to peace, security and sustainable development.

60. Our **climate diplomacy** will combine work on the essential **linkages and synergies** between climate action and security, sustainability and long term economic growth. This will also involve ensuring maximum coherence between climate policy and energy policy, as the EU works to spur the transition to low greenhouse gas emissions, climate resilient, and competitive economies which provide growth, job opportunities and a long term path for sustainable development.
61. We will further strengthen our **energy diplomacy** in support of the EU's energy security, diversification efforts and initiatives that promote sustainable energy markets. Energy partnerships and dialogues should continue to be coherent with relevant foreign and external policy goals - including climate goals - and promote diversification of sources, suppliers and routes, as well as safe and sustainable low-emission and energy efficiency technologies including with a view for business opportunities for EU companies. Energy dialogues should, where appropriate, include discussions of global and regional energy security developments and where possible, take into account particular specificities and existing relevant engagements of EU Member States. They should also ensure that sovereignty and sovereign rights of Member States to explore and develop their natural resources are safeguarded. The EU remains committed to the promotion and continuous improvement of the highest level of standards of nuclear safety in third countries.
62. Efforts towards the implementation of June 2016 Communication on **Culture in external relations** will focus on enhancing the contribution the EU already makes to international cultural relations and proposing ways to develop the EU's international cultural relations in order to advance its objectives to promote international peace and stability, safeguard diversity, and stimulate jobs and growth. The EU will continue to advocate science diplomacy at every opportunity to help build bridges and improve international relations; to address global challenges through sound scientific advice; and to embrace globalisation through enhanced science, technology and innovation cooperation.

(4) CSDP AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

63. Preventing conflicts is more efficient and effective than engaging with crises after they break out. In recognition of this, there are two priority areas in the implementation of the Global Strategy:
- (1) building the resilience of states and societies – and thus shifting the emphasis from crisis containment to more upstream preventative measures - and (2) developing an integrated approach to conflicts and crises that will allow the EU to act at all stages of the conflict cycle. Work has begun on both of these priorities in 2017, including through the aforementioned Joint Communication on resilience. The EU will progress work on these areas further in 2017 as part of multi-stranded implementation of the Global Strategy.
64. The implementation of the Global Strategy in the area of **security and defence** will continue to be a priority in 2017. In 2016 the November Foreign Affairs Council and the December European Council gave a substantive tasking to step up cooperation on Security and Defence, setting the EU level of ambition. Work on implementation will continue on this basis, including the actions which were identified in the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence presented by the HR/VP in November 2016. Progress will be regularly reported, as was done in March 2017 and May 2017 by substantive Council conclusions, which is reflected in a comprehensive report on the overall implementation of the Global Strategy. These steps will be closely synchronised with the implementation of the European Defence Action Plan and the Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw by the leaders of the EU institutions and NATO.

65. The new EU level of ambition in security and defence will drive EU capability development, based on a review of the priority areas of civilian CSDP missions and of required defence capabilities and priorities set out through the Capability Development Plan. Defence cooperation will be of key importance to fulfilling this ambition. As requested by the Council, the High Representative/Head of the Agency has submitted to Ministers an initial reflection for a Member State driven **Coordinated Annual Review on Defence**; this is aimed at developing a more structured way for delivering capabilities based on greater transparency, political visibility and Member State commitment. The EU agreed on the need to launch an inclusive and ambitious **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)**. PESCO should be open to all Member States who are willing to make necessary binding commitments and meet the criteria, based on articles 42.6 and 46 TEU and Protocol 10 of the treaties. It will aim at assisting Member States develop new defence capabilities and bring together existing military assets in view of their coordinated deployment. Any capabilities developed through PESCO will remain owned and operated by Member States, who have a single set of forces that they can also use in other frameworks, including UN and NATO. In addition to these, the following specific lines of work are followed this year with regard to the implementation of the Global Strategy in the field of security and defence: consolidating the work of the newly established **Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC)** within the EU Military Staff of the EEAS for the operational planning and conduct of non-executive military missions, as well as to reinforce civilian/military synergies and coordination; strengthening the EU's rapid response toolbox, in particular by enhancing the preparation, modularity and effective financing of the EU Battlegroups; identification of possible projects and moving forward in the operationalisation of the **Capacity Building in Security and Development (CBSD)**, reiterating its flexible geographic scope; developing a more strategic approach for CSDP cooperation with third countries.

66. Work will also be taken forward to assess in more detail the implications of the Global Strategy for the priority areas of **civilian crisis management**, initially agreed by the European Council in Feira in June 2000, in order to address both identified new challenges and persisting gaps in the originally agreed capabilities as well as the conduct of a timely review of these priority areas. In addition, work is underway to enhance the responsiveness of civilian crisis management, by implementing a multi-layered approach including the possible creation of a core responsiveness capacity, which could act as a planning and start-up capacity as well as provide scalable and temporary reinforcement or provision of specialised expertise.
67. The **European Defence Action Plan (EDAP)**, put forward by the European Commission in November 2016, is a key element of the defence package supported by EU Leaders in December 2016. It proposes new financial tools to support Member State cooperation on defence capabilities, in line with identified priorities, and to foster a more integrated, sustainable, competitive and innovative European defence industrial base with equal opportunities for the defence industry in the EU. Work will continue on the establishment of a European Defence Fund based on proposals by the Commission.

68. In light of the current political and security environment, cooperation with partners, notably the United Nations, NATO, the OSCE and the African Union, is of particular importance. With regard to **EU-NATO cooperation**, as a follow-up to the Joint Declaration signed by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of NATO in Warsaw on 8 July 2016, the EEAS and NATO International Staff – in close cooperation with the Commission and EDA – established a common set of proposals for implementation endorsed by both Councils in December 2016. The 42 actions cover all seven areas of cooperation identified in the Joint Declaration: 1) countering hybrid threats and cooperating on strategic communication; 2) operational cooperation including maritime and migration issues; 3) cyber security and defence; 4) defence capabilities; 5) defence industry and research; 6) exercises; 7) supporting Eastern and Southern partners' capacity-building efforts. This work will be taken forward in the spirit of full openness and transparency, in full respect of the decision-making autonomy and procedures of both organisations and in close cooperation with and full involvement of Member States. It will be based on the principles of inclusiveness and reciprocity without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of any Member State. The first progress report on implementation was welcomed by the Council on the 19 June 2017.

International Security

69. In 2017 the EU will continue to promote external policies and cooperation that enhance the security of the EU and its citizens, focusing on the internal/external security nexus *inter alia* in the areas of counter-terrorism, non-proliferation and disarmament, cyber security, maritime security, sanctions and strategic communication. Work will continue on mainstreaming security policy into the EU's external action. Strategic programming for the period 2018-2020 of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) is ongoing . Also, mainstreaming of security policy into other instruments will be taken forward, not least with the European Neighbourhood Instrument.

70. The EU will focus its **external counter-terrorism** (CT) efforts on Turkey, the Western Balkans, Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan through dedicated capacity building support efforts and upgraded dialogue. The CT/Security Experts network in EU delegations will be consolidated and expanded from the current 13 to strengthen its presence in the Western Balkans and deploy in the Horn of Africa. An important priority will be the dialogue with the US on CT efforts with a focus on countering violent extremism, multilateral cooperation and capacity building efforts in third countries. A number of events will shape the coming year including upgraded CT political dialogues, consultations and multilateral meetings. There will be dialogues and consultations with Turkey, the Western Balkans, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Russia, India, Pakistan, Australia, the US and others. A number of working level meetings, workshops and study visits will also take place. The EU's operational partnerships will be also strengthened through the Western Balkans Counter-terrorism initiative and the Integrative Internal Security Governance. The meeting in March 2017 of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum provided an opportunity to take stock of the progress and the way ahead for this multilateral CT initiative. Experience gained in this field will be analysed with a view to enhance the EU's external engagement in the fight against terrorism, through a coherent mobilisation of all available instruments. The combination of home grown terrorists operating in networks; terrorists acting alone; foreign terrorist fighter returnees be they men, women or minors; attacks directed, encouraged or inspired by Da'esh and Al Qaeda; cyber related challenges; and the propagation of ideologies and beliefs that leads to radicalization and violent extremism, are parts of the evolving threat picture.

71. In the field of **disarmament, non-proliferation and arms export controls**, the main events in 2017 will be the start of preparations for the upcoming review of key international instruments, notably the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2018 and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2020. Other important conferences will bring together the states parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty and the Arms Trade Treaty, respectively. 2017 will also see the commencement of international negotiations aimed at a legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons. The EU will demonstrate its continued support to key international instruments such as the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects, the Missile Technology Control Regime, Wassenaar Arrangement and other such instruments. The EU recalls its support for the membership of all EU Member States in non-proliferation export control regimes. Special attention will be paid to the prevention, detection and mitigation of risks and threats related to the illicit use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials including through the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence. Following up on the Global Strategy, the EU will revise and update its Strategy on Small Arms and Light Weapons.
72. Sectorally, the second implementation report of the **Maritime Security** Action Plan will provide an opportunity to take stock and move forward on maritime security. Following the Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw by leaders of EU institutions and NATO, operational coordination in the maritime domain will be strengthened. The EU will be co-chairing the Intersessional Meeting on Maritime Security of the ASEAN Regional forum.
73. Increased attention will be paid to the external dimension of **aviation security**, especially in supporting the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2309 (2016). Working with Member States, a third countries risk-based approach is being pursued which will inform prioritised capacity building assistance efforts, associated programming actions and political lobbying, including via the EU CT Expert network, to address civil aviation threats to EU interests and citizens.

74. The **cyber security** of the EU and its citizens will be high on the agenda in 2017. The EEAS and the Commission will review and update the EU Cybersecurity Strategy, which will respond to the heightened cyber threat landscape in a context of increasing hybrid threats. Also, further development of a Cyber Diplomacy toolbox was agreed in order to provide a framework for the EU to deter cyber operations and to react effectively to large scale malicious cyber activity. Cyber defence will remain in focus with the continuous implementation of the Cyber Defence Policy Framework and an increased focus on reach-out and training activities with Member States.
75. In 2017 the EU will continue to work to ensure that the EU's autonomous restrictive measures target those responsible for policies and practices which breach international law in order to bring about change. In particular it will continue to review and up-date, where necessary, restrictive measures including in view of the latest jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice and will seek to mitigate the risk of unintended consequences on the wider population. In the context of sanctions lifting, the EU will continue to promote engagement, trade and investment.
76. In the area of **strategic communication**, the EU will continue to joining up efforts in the field of public diplomacy including strategic communication, inside and outside the EU – in particular to our East and South - to speak with one voice and ultimately promote its core values.

Intelligence and Situational Awareness

77. The November 2016 FAC conclusions invite the EEAS together with Member States to reinforce the existing network of EU and Member States' structures contributing to autonomous situational awareness in order to better inform the EU's decision-making capacity. This will require streamlining of capacities and recruiting specific expertise to address pressing challenges including hybrid and terrorism.