



EU-NATO Cooperation

The political context

In the current strategic environment, cooperation between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is essential. The two organisations are faced with unprecedented challenges emanating from the South and the East. The security of EU and NATO are inter-connected: not only are 22 EU Member States also NATO Allies; together, they can also mobilise a broad range of tools and make the most efficient use of resources to address those challenges and enhance the security of their citizens.

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 the strengthening of the Trans-Atlantic bond and to burden sharing. A stronger EU and a stronger NATO are mutually reinforcing.

EU-NATO cooperation

On 8 July 2016 the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, together with the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization signed a Joint

Declaration in Warsaw with a view to giving new impetus and new substance to the EU-NATO strategic partnership. It outlined seven concrete areas where cooperation between the two organisations should be enhanced: 1. countering hybrid threats; 2. operational cooperation including at sea and on migration; 3. cyber security and defence; 4. defence capabilities; 5. defence industry and research; 6. exercises; 7. supporting Eastern and Southern partners' capacity-building efforts.

On the basis of the mandate by the Joint Declaration, the European Union and NATO established a common set of proposals which was endorsed by the EU and NATO Councils on 6 December 2016. The set includes 42 concrete actions for the implementation of the Joint Declaration in all seven areas of cooperation with a clear focus on deliverables. A follow-up mechanism ensures that progress is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

With a view to consolidating progress and ensuring further advances in all areas, on 5 December 2017, the two Councils endorsed a common set of new proposals. The set includes a total of 34 actions for the implementation of the Joint Declaration. They also address new topics, such as counter-terrorism, military mobility and women, peace and security.

A new era of interaction

As a direct follow-up to the Joint Declaration, the two organisations are opening their activities to each other to gain better knowledge and understanding of each other. Cooperation is now indeed the established norm and daily practice, fully corresponding to the new level of ambition referred to in the Joint Declaration, providing a solid basis for further enhanced interaction.



Photo: Donald Tusk, Jens Stoltenberg and Jean-Claude Juncker (from left to right)

Progress

The High Representative/Vice President/Head of Agency and the Secretary General of NATO submitted their first progress report on the implementation of the 42 actions to the respective Councils in June 2017. The second progress report in December highlighted the enhanced EU-NATO relationship and outlined some key specific actions in implementing the common set of proposals, including the following:



Hybrid threats

Our cooperation on countering hybrid threats remains of key importance. The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki has been set up and is now operational: 12 Member States and Allies, as well as EU and NATO staffs have joined the Centre's Steering Board. The EU Hybrid Fusion Cell and the NATO Hybrid Analytical Branch are in discussions on how to best exploit the capability of the new European Centre of Excellence through exchanging publicly available information.

Consultations on strategic communication support for Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia continue.



Defence Capabilities

EU Member States and NATO Allies have one single set of forces. Coherence of output and timelines continues to be pursued between the NATO Defence Planning Process and the EU Capability Development Plan.



Defence industry and research

Interactions focused on exchanging updates at staff level on industry related matters and Small and Medium Enterprises' access to defence procurement and cross-border supply chains.



Operational cooperation including maritime issues

Cooperation and cooaaordination at tactical and operational levels between EUNAVFOR Sophia and Operation Sea Guardian have continued through regular information sharing and logistical support.



Supporting partners' capacity building

Assisting partners in building their capacities and fostering resilience, in particular in the Western Balkans, and in our Eastern and Southern neighbourhood is a common objective. Intensive consultations, in particular in the Western Balkans and in our Eastern and Southern neighbourhood led to the identification of areas of common interest and initial deliverables for each of the three pilot countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tunisia and the Republic of Moldova) as a first step.

The EU adopted a financing decision in July 2017 to allocate €2 million for 2017 as a contribution to the NATO Building Integrity Programme, which aims at reducing the risk of corruption and promoting good governance in the defence and security sectors. The financing will cover Neighbourhood countries on a voluntary basis, and is pending on NATO completing the six-pillar assessment.



Exercises

The first parallel and coordinated exercise EU PACE17/CMX17, was held in September and October 2017.. Intensive staff interaction took place on: Early Warning/ Situational Awareness; Strategic Communications; Cyber defence; Crisis Prevention and Response.



Cyber security

The increase in cyber threats, demonstrates the need for a strategic approach to threats and challenges in order to protect the well-being of our citizens. Further exchange of concepts and doctrines is under preparation.

Next steps

The next progress report on implementation is due in June 2018. A written report will be submitted to the respective EU and NATO Councils on modalities for systematic cooperation, engagement and liaison between the staffs of the two Organisations in the implementation of the common proposals.

EU-NATO cooperation continues to take place on the basis of key guiding principles: openness, transparency, inclusiveness and reciprocity, in full respect of the decision-making autonomy and procedures of both organisations without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of any Member State.