



IMPLEMENTING THE
EU GLOBAL STRATEGY
YEAR 2



**European Union
Global Strategy**

FROM SHARED VISION
TO COMMON ACTION:
**A GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR THE
EUROPEAN UNION'S FOREIGN AND
SECURITY POLICY**

IMPLEMENTATION REPORT YEAR 2
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Two years ago, the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy anticipated that the years ahead would be a time of “predictable unpredictability.” Indeed, the global system has become more uncertain and less stable since then. Long held beliefs and long standing international institutions are being questioned. The rules-based international order built after the Second World War has been challenged in a way never seen before. Trade disputes have stoked new tensions, while crucial international mechanisms of cooperation and dialogue have seen their effectiveness and credibility challenged. Respect for human rights and democracy has been declining in many parts of the world. While the territorial defeat of Daesh has almost been achieved, a political solution to the war in Syria is still not in sight. Other protracted conflicts, from Yemen to Gaza, were further exacerbated. The patient work to build win-win solutions is too often mistaken for an exercise in naivety.

In this challenging context, the European Union has continued to be a leading force for diplomacy, cooperation and compromise, guided by the EU Global Strategy. We still believe that international rules are not a constraint, but a guarantee for everyone. We still believe that only multilateral diplomacy can lead to solutions that will stand the test of time.

Over the past year, we have chosen to invest in a stronger European Union and, at the same time, in a stronger cooperation with our partners. The Union has taken unprecedented steps to increase internal cooperation in the field of security and defence; worked to preserve an international agreement on Iran’s nuclear programme; re-energised the European perspective of the Western Balkans; engaged with partners to strengthen global governance and seek mutually beneficial solutions to common issues, from fighting the impact of climate change to governing migration.

Two years after its launch, the EU Global Strategy has proven to be the right compass to guide the Union’s action and underpin its ambition to be a credible power and a reliable partner. Despite the challenging international context, the last twelve months have been a period of delivery and progress on many fronts, turning the Global Strategy’s vision into action.



IMPLEMENTING THE EU GLOBAL STRATEGY – A YEAR OF ACTION

Over the past year, work has advanced in the delivery of all the five priorities of the EU Global Strategy: **security and defence**, where significant progress was made notably through many new initiatives; building **state and societal resilience**, a strand of work that runs through all our actions and policies; adopting an **integrated approach to conflicts and crises** with prevention at its core, strengthening **cooperative regional orders** and a **rules-based global governance** fit for the 21st century. Efforts continued to join up all strands of work in a more coherent and effective way, in particular when it comes to linking internal and external policies, in fields such as migration, cyber-security and counterterrorism, as well as security and defence.

1. SECURITY AND DEFENCE

A more credible European defence is essential for our internal and external security. More than ever, today, Europe needs to take greater responsibility for its own security. New mechanisms were created to allow Member States and the EU to plan together to ensure we are fit to face the threats and challenges of tomorrow. We will be able to research defence together, to build and buy the capabilities we need, to act together to keep our citizens safe and contribute to global peace and security. European cooperation serves to make national defence spending more efficient, avoid duplications and exploit economies of scale.

On 14 December 2017 we launched the **Permanent Structured Cooperation on defence (PESCO)**, an opportunity provided for in the Lisbon Treaty ten years ago but never used until now. Twenty-five Member States have committed to join forces on common projects, to provide troops and assets for common missions and operations. They also committed to speed-up their national decision-making and share information among them. They committed to work together more closely on joint military training and exercises and to improve their ability to counter threats by stepping up maritime surveillance, cyber information sharing and military disaster relief. Seventeen concrete projects have already been launched, from maritime security to cyber rapid response teams. Cooperation will make us more effective on the ground. It will also save us money at a time when national budgets are already stretched.

A good example of EU action to increase security and defence of our Union is **military mobility** within the European Union with both a PESCO project launched to that purpose as well as an Action Plan that was adopted

by the High Representative and the Commission on 28 March 2018. The plan aims at improving the ability to react more quickly in the event of a crisis and allow seamless movement of troops and vehicles across the continent by ensuring that European road and rail networks are suitable for military transport. This should help ensuring that military equipment and troops will no longer be held at borders for lengthy checks or blocked in transport. Military mobility will also benefit other key partners, most of all NATO, demonstrating that the EU and its Member States are shouldering their responsibility.

In June 2018, the European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement on the Regulation establishing the **European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP)**, proposed by the Commission just a year earlier. The Programme foresees an investment of EUR 500 million over two years to co-finance collaborative capability development, in support of the competitiveness and innovative capacity of the EU's defence industry. In the meantime, four research projects have already been awarded funding under the preparatory action for defence research.

On 12 June 2018, the Commission has proposed a much more ambitious **European Defence Fund (EDF)** under the next Multiannual Financial Framework. In other words, for the first time the European budget contains a specific line for defence and is implemented by a specific Fund to complement Member States' investment in defence. The EDF is endowed with EUR 13 billion to finance collaborative research projects and co-fund capability development. This is a true European instrument which will create efficiency, improve the defence spending at European level, favour approximation of defence cultures and enhance EU strategic autonomy.

Additionally, the High Representative with the support of the European Commission, presented a proposal to establish a European Peace Facility (EPF), a new off-budget fund worth EUR 10.5 billion over the timeframe of the next Multiannual Financial Framework. The proposed Facility should substantially enhance the Union's ability to finance operational actions under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) that have military or defence implications and therefore cannot be financed under the EU budget. It would draw together and enhance existing off-budget mechanisms devoted to security and defence, thereby overcoming their gaps and limitations. The European Peace Facility would allow the EU to be much more efficient in deploying our military missions, but also to better support our partners in dealing with our shared security challenges.

On 8 June 2017, the Council adopted the decision establishing the military planning and conduct capability (MPCC) in order to make the non-executive European missions more effective and to improve the training of soldiers of partner countries.

The EU has also stepped up its civilian responsiveness to make missions around the world more effective. In May 2018 EU Member States decided to focus on strengthening police, rule of law and civil administration in fragile spaces and conflict zones, including security sector reform and monitoring that are an essential factor in stabilisation and prevention. **Civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)** missions can help tackle security challenges linked to hybrid threats, cyber security, terrorism and organised crime, border management and maritime security. They also play a role in countering radicalisation and will take into account the need to protect cultural heritage. Joint planning and better information sharing improve the effectiveness of missions, as part of a joined up approach that ensures adequate linkages between security and defence to the Union's work in the fields of development, stabilisation and humanitarian aid. A new concept for civilian CSDP was agreed. Building on this concept, work is currently ongoing to complete a Civilian Capability Development Plan. By the end of the year, a Civilian CSDP Compact will set out the parameters for EU Member States and institutions to delivering upon this pledge.

In parallel, the European Union has deepened its **partnerships with NATO** on various fronts. We have agreed on a concrete set of common actions to tackle hybrid threats, promote cyber security and develop military capabilities. Common work is also focusing on military mobility, in line with the EU Action Plan, counterterrorism and Women, Peace and Security. We have also deepened our cooperation on maritime missions. For example EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia – which aims at combating people trafficking and smuggling at sea, trains Libyan Coastguards, and contributes to saving lives of those that attempt the perilous crossing of the Mediterranean – works closely with NATO’s Operation Sea Guardian, which counters terrorism at sea.

The Union also took important steps towards cooperating even more closely with partners around the world. A more strategic approach to security and defence partnerships was set out. Already today, more than 25 non-EU countries have participated in our civilian and military missions around the world.

Cooperation with the United Nations to foster peace and security has intensified in a number of important fields, notably in Central African Republic, Mali, including with the G5 Sahel Joint Force, Libya and Somalia. We are also working together closely on policing and on Women, Peace and Security.

2. RESILIENCE AND THE INTEGRATED APPROACH

Building peace today goes beyond the defence and military dimensions. Responding to immediate humanitarian needs, helping to rebuild countries and societies torn by conflicts, and addressing the root causes of instability to prevent further violence form part of the EU’s focus on **resilience** and our **integrated approach to conflicts and crises**. Human security is at the core of all our actions and wherever we can, we engage at an early stage to prevent conflicts and save lives, also in close cooperation with civil society on the ground. We also stay engaged in the aftermath of conflict to ensure that peace takes root and countries do not slip back into instability and violent conflict. We are convinced that this is the best way to invest in lasting peace.

In order to achieve lasting results, we bring together all our tools for use around the world. Whether in Afghanistan, in the Sahel or in Iraq building strong, resilient, and inclusive state institutions requires investing in the development of effective and professional police, judges, doctors and school administration, as well as in a reliable and democratically controlled army. Strong institutions are a barrier to the spreading of radicalism, criminality and authoritarian regimes. A holistic security model is the hallmark of the European approach. The work being conducted in the Sahel, where the EU is the first donor with more than EUR 3.9 billion of development cooperation and is active with three distinct CSDP missions is an example of this.

Stability requires reforms to strengthen governance, respect for human rights, democracy and rule of law, and a strong focus on economic development, to ensure education, jobs and opportunities for the younger generation. This is true for countries suffering the repercussions of the Syria crisis like Lebanon and Jordan, where action on political and economic reform helps to stabilise local and refugee populations alike. It is also true for those affected by what is happening in Libya and the unprecedented flows of irregular migrants through Africa. Investments in reforms in countries like Tunisia and Morocco are investments in stability and Europe’s security.

The work on **mediation and reconciliation** is another key dimension of the integrated approach. This is why we have invested in **mediation efforts in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Libya and the Central African Republic**. In **Colombia**, we are contributing to post-conflict economic development and the reintegration of former rebel fighter into civilian life, with a particular focus on child-soldiers.

A particular focus of our work has been to promote a **political solution to the Syrian conflict**. Following the first Brussels Conference on the future of Syria and the region in 2017, a second Brussels Conference took place in April 2018 to mobilise humanitarian aid from international donors as well as support to the host countries to boost their own resilience and that of refugee communities, with measures beyond the strictly humanitarian, ensuring “No Lost Generation”, to ensure today’s refugees can be part of a more stable future, not the source of future instability. The Conference also underlined the support to the UN-led intra-Syrian peace talks in Geneva. From the very beginning of the crisis, a priority for the EU has been to engage in humanitarian action to provide short term relief through food and supplies to the Syrian civilian population, as well as to invest in education and creating the conditions for reconstruction in the long term.

The EU is also contributing to the **stabilisation of Iraq**, after the territorial defeat of Da’esh. We are supporting the Iraqi federal government in its stabilisation, reconciliation and reconstruction efforts. In February 2018 the EU co-chaired the international donors’ Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq in Kuwait. In November 2017 a new civilian CSDP mission in support of Security Sector Reform in Iraq (EUAM Iraq) was set up, to assist and accompany the implementation of the Iraqi National Security Strategy. The EU integrated approach also included front-line humanitarian assistance, which supported the main medical and aid relief operations for civilians fleeing the last strongholds of Da’esh in Mosul or Hawija, and work to address the suffering of the thousands of displaced people.

Conflict prevention means also investing more in our capacities for **early warning and risk assessment**. Over the past year, we have made significant progress to identify risks and facilitate early preventive action in areas such as climate change, migration, and forced displacement. Promotion of human rights and women’s inclusion are also key elements of EU conflict prevention efforts. The EU has made significant progress in further elaborating its integrated approach to stabilization and conflict prevention launching its first preventive stabilization action based on the Article 28 of the Treaty in Central Mali. Also, the EU and Member States agreed on the need to raise the political profile of conflict prevention activities and ensure our tools are fit for purpose.

3. COOPERATIVE REGIONAL ORDERS

The EU, as a primary example of how cooperation and integration among States fosters peace and prosperity, supports cooperative regional orders as a way to ensure greater global stability and security.

The **Western Balkans** remain a priority for the Union. The EU is determined to strengthen and intensify its engagement at all levels to support the region’s political, economic and social transformation, including through increased assistance, based on tangible progress on the rule of law, especially the fight against corruption and organised crime, good governance, as well as the respect for human rights and the rights of persons belonging to minorities as well as on socio-economic reforms, by the countries in the region. Over the past year the EU supported the Western Balkans partners in taking credible and irreversible steps in this direction.

As outlined in its Strategy on the Western Balkans presented in February 2018, the EU supports the Western Balkans partners pledge to continue strengthening good neighbourly relations, regional stability and mutual cooperation. This includes in particular finding and implementing definitive, inclusive and binding solutions for their bilateral disputes and devoting additional efforts to reconciliation. In line with the strategy, the Commission’s support for the Western Balkans will focus on the following flagship areas: rule of law, migration and security, socio-economic development, connectivity, digital agenda, reconciliation and good neighbourly relations.

In this context, the EU strongly supported the negotiations under UN auspices that on 17 June 2018 led to an agreement between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on the name of the latter. This historic agreement between the two countries provides a source of inspiration to the entire region of South-East Europe and is also clear proof of the transformative power of the European perspective. Progress is also being made on the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo¹, based on the ongoing dialogue facilitated by the High Representative/Vice President, towards a comprehensive, legally binding normalisation agreement.

Regarding the enlargement process, the European Commission recommended on 17 April opening accession negotiations with Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and acknowledged that Serbia and Montenegro have continued to advance in their membership negotiations. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have presented their joint answers to the Questionnaire for opening accession negotiations, which are currently under evaluation. The EU is also promoting cooperation on counter-terrorism, organised crime and border security, including through implementation of the Integrated Internal Security Governance Initiative, agreements with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and developing the envisaged joint action plans on counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism. All these steps are firmly rooted in the EU's strategy for the Western Balkans adopted and in the Sofia Declaration adopted at the EU-Western Balkans summit held in Sofia in May this year.

In November 2017 the Summit of the **Eastern Partnership countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine** – took place, providing momentum to advance in twenty practical fields of cooperation to achieve tangible results for the citizens of that region (20 Deliverables for 2020). Many of these have to do with the resilience of States and societies in that region: from improving energy security to supporting economic development, to strengthening the media environment against disinformation, from support to public sector reform and security sector reform, fight against corruption, support to the decentralisation process, building or rebuilding critical infrastructure to widening the space for civil society. The EU is also scaling up support to youth.

In our relations with **Russia**, full respect for international law and rules-based regional and global order remains paramount. We have been consistent and united in our approach. The five principles agreed in March 2016, and reaffirmed in April 2018, are an effective and relevant framework to guide our engagement with Russia. Restrictive measures remain in place, and any substantive change in our relations with Russia is conditioned by full implementation of the Minsk agreements. At the same time we have engaged selectively on major foreign and security challenges like Iran or Syria in line with our interests, and continued strengthening our support for Russian civil society and people to people links.

Our partnership with **Africa** – and its regional organisations – has entered a new phase: we face common challenges on a number of areas, and we both want to take our own responsibilities in our shared interest. In November 2017, at the 5th African Union-European Union Summit in Abidjan, we set up a joint task force of our two organisations with the United Nations, to help migrants held in detention centres in Libya go back home in a safe and dignified way. Our support to the **G5 Sahel Joint Force** is another key example of the importance of investing in global-regional security partnerships. The High Representative/Vice President proposal on “Capacity Building in support of Security and Development” was approved by the Council and the European Parliament: it will allow the European Union to train and equip African forces when they carry out humanitarian or development tasks.

1- This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

The European External Investment Plan, with an input of EUR 4.1 billion, aims to leverage EUR 44 billion of total investments in countries neighbouring the EU and in Africa. As part of the EU's economic diplomacy, it will help promoting economic development, create jobs, support economies and give people more opportunities in their home countries – thus also ensuring social benefits.

A strong and well-functioning transatlantic partnership remains a crucial element for Europe's security and prosperity. The EU remains committed to the strategic partnership with the **United States**, based on shared values, interests, and a willingness to play a responsible role in world affairs to our mutual benefit. The EU has worked closely over the past year with the US Administration, Congress and others in the many areas in which we have common objectives (Western Balkans, Ukraine/Russia, DPRK, Counter Terrorism, cyber, security and defence including cooperation with NATO, to name but a few). At the same time, we have stood up for our values, principles and interests when we felt that they were challenged and we will continue to do so. This is particularly true when it comes to defending and promoting the rules-based international order that has been built together with the US in recent decades. We have seen an important strengthening of our relationship with **Canada** during the past year with the provisional entry into force of the Strategic Partnership Agreement which followed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) earlier last year. Not only do the EU and Canada continue to co-operate closely, we are also opening up new areas of work be it security and defence or gender issues.

Our work with **Latin America and the Caribbean** has focused on modernizing our association agreements with **MERCOSUR, Mexico and Chile**. These association agreements, now in their final stage of negotiation, have huge potential for trade, investments and cooperation. Negotiations of a **new Partnership Agreement with ACP countries** should be launched soon. Building on this important work, a joint Communication of the High Representative/Vice President and the European Commission on EU-LAC relations is expected for later this year. The provisional application of the Political Dialogue and cooperation agreement also rings in a new era in the EU's cooperation with **Cuba**. The EU continues to firmly support the implementation of the **peace agreement in Colombia** also through the EU Trust Fund for Colombia, in order to rebuild the social and economic fabric of the country, giving new hope to Colombian citizens, especially in the rural areas, which have been the most affected by the conflict.

Over the past year we have deepened economic diplomacy and scaled up our security role in **Asia**. This includes investing **in deescalating the tensions on the Korean peninsula**, especially when it comes to non-proliferation, joint counter-piracy exercises in the West Indian Ocean and maritime security. We have worked with **Afghanistan's** neighbours to strengthen regional support to the peace process in the country, particularly at the Tashkent Conference on Afghanistan that we co-chaired. We deepened our political and trade relationships with our partners in the region. We concluded negotiations with **Japan** on the Strategic Partnership Agreement and the Economic Partnership Agreement. We made important progress towards the conclusion of **Free Trade Agreements with Singapore and Vietnam, and launching of negotiations with Australia and New Zealand**. In March 2018 we ratified the **EU-Philippines Partnership and Cooperation Agreement**. In 2017 we also celebrated a major milestone in its relations with South-East Asia: **the 40th anniversary of the establishment of official relations between the EU and ASEAN**. To develop the full potential of our relations with an increasingly important partner in the region and globally, we started work on a new EU Strategy on **India**. The EU is also working on a strategy to **strengthen connectivity between Europe and Asia** with a strong focus on governance and the financing architecture, with a view to fostering positive impact on climate change, state resilience and cooperative regional orders in Asia.

The EU has continued to engage with **China**, on the basis of the EU China Strategy of 2016 on global issues, such as climate change, and common security interests, such as the Iran nuclear deal, Afghanistan and the situation on the Korean Peninsula. At the same time the EU is working to ensure greater reciprocity in our economic relations. The EU is notably negotiating better access for investments through an investment agreement. The EU has also reformed and strengthened its trade defence instruments, and the Commission has proposed establishing a framework for screening of foreign direct investments into the EU. The EU has used its engagement with China on infrastructure connections between Europe and Asia to align investment better with EU strategic networks and to promote the principles of transparency, economic and social sustainability. And it is encouraging closer cooperation on meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and conflict resolution. Adherence to international rules and norms and respect for human rights is, for the EU, fundamental to the quality of the relationship.

4. SHAPING A MULTILATERAL ORDER FOR THE 2^{1ST} CENTURY

At a time when many voices are calling it into question, **the European Union stands up for a rules-based international order**. Promoting such order is a key interest for the Union and its Member States. The EU is stepping up its engagement in multilateral institutions to ensure that common solutions can be found to the challenges we all confront together. This year has been particularly important for further deepening the **EU-UN partnership** and to support reform efforts led by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to make the UN fit for purpose in a rapidly changing world.

The EU is playing a lead role in driving forward and upholding global agreements, as shown by the EU work on climate diplomacy through the Paris agreement on climate change.

Implementing the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is an extraordinary opportunity to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable and inclusive development. The new European Consensus on development recognises the link between security, migration, climate change and humanitarian action.

The European Union is fully committed to stand by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. The agreement is a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture, a key component of Middle Eastern security, and above all the tangible demonstration that multilateralism and patient diplomacy deliver. This multilateral agreement, which was unanimously endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 is clearly serving its purpose – preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The European Union is working together with other signatories and international partners to preserve it.

To promote international peace and security, manage migration, and bolster multilateralism, partnerships are essential. The ground breaking **joint trilateral African Union -EU-United Nations cooperation**, launched at the European Union- African Union Summit in Abidjan, paved the way for enhanced cooperation not only on migration, but on the wider peace and security agenda.

Investing in human rights and inclusive and sustainable development is the best way to prevent societies from descending into crisis. The 70th anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an opportunity to continue to advance this essential work at a time when respect for human rights is eroding in many parts of the world. Support for civil society and human rights defenders has been a key priority together with upholding freedom of association, of expression and freedom of religion or belief.

The “**Good Human Rights Stories**” is the name of a new EU initiative, to be launched at the UN General Assembly high level week in September. Its aim is to show, together with a broad alliance of countries from across the

globe, examples of positive human rights practises that have made fundamental changes to individual lives, communities, and societies.

Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the EU guaranteed by the Treaties, and a priority that is mainstreamed in its internal and external policy. The EU is fully supportive of the **Women, Peace and Security** agenda which it continued to implement domestically as well as externally. 2017 also marked the launch of the **Spotlight Initiative**, a new partnership of the EU and UN to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. As a founding member of the Champions of Youth group in the UN, the EU will continue its investment into youth and peacebuilding and accelerate the implementation of the **Youth, Peace and Security** agenda.

On the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute, the EU has further strengthened its support to, and promotion of the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**. The EU will continue to protect human rights of migrants and refugees, as central part of the EU's comprehensive and holistic system for managing migration. Over 2018, work will continue to develop economic, social and cultural rights, inter alia by developing human rights guidelines on clean drinking water and sanitation.

Electoral Observation Missions were deployed to the Gambia, in its first elections after the end of the dictatorship, Kosovo², Lebanon, Tunisia and Honduras, among other countries.

2- This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



1. STRENGTHENING THE LINK BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLICIES

The EU Global Strategy promotes a more joined up way of working between external and internal policies to ensure that the EU can more effectively tackle today's complex and cross cutting challenges, such as climate change, migration, terrorism. Main areas of progress over the past year have been to link up the internal and external dimensions in our work on migration, cyber and counter-terrorism.

Migration is a global issue that can only be addressed effectively by the international community as a whole. Our work over the past year has focused on: cooperation, protection, opportunities and investments, fight against smuggling, and return and readmission. To this end, the European Union continues to work in close cooperation with Member States and international partners to save lives, provide protection, offer safe and legal pathways for migration and tackle the root causes that force people to leave their homes in first place, as well as fight the criminal networks that often take advantage of people's despair. To this end the European Union launched the Partnership Framework on Migration in June 2016 and started implementing this innovative framework with a number of priority countries of origin and transit on all migration routes developing a comprehensive approach looking at all aspects of migration.

To give some concrete examples of what we have achieved thanks to our work: over 25.000 migrants have been safely returning home from detention centres in Libya, arrivals on the Central Mediterranean route have gone down 77 % and an evacuation mechanism for those in need of protection has been established in Niger. In the field of returns we have concluded five new readmission arrangements with key countries of origin, matching them with investments and support for legal migration.

Now we are engaged to feed this work in partnership in the broader context of the Global Compact on Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees with the aim to support the United Nations in achieving the first global framework, covering all dimensions of migration.

The coming months will be decisive to consolidate the results and move forward, continuing the work together with our partners in order to move away from irregular migration, violation of human rights towards well managed

flows that are safe and bring essential benefits to all societies, in countries of origin, transit and destination.

The EU has accelerated its work on **Cybersecurity**, which is critical to both our prosperity and our security. Malicious cyber activities not only threaten our economies and the Digital Single Market, but also the very functioning of our democracies, our freedoms and our values. Cyber threats come from both non-state and state actors: they are often criminal, motivated by profit, but they can also be political and strategic. To tackle the growing risks to our internal and external security, the Commission has presented a comprehensive cybersecurity package in September 2017 to improve resilience, detection and response to threats. At the same time, the EU has adopted the “cyber diplomacy toolbox”, which contributes to conflict prevention, the mitigation of cybersecurity threats and greater stability in international relations. The EU also organised and contributed to several cyber exercises such as PACE17, CyberEurope as well as the CYBRID exercise. The EU has further strengthened its cyber dialogues with the US, Japan, India, South Korea, Brazil and China and works closely with international organisations, such as NATO, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the OSCE, and the Council of Europe. At the same time the EU is working to preserve the benefits of cyberspace and to promote and open and free cyberspace, building on the EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline. This is why we are continuing to implement our policies on EU Cyber Defence, aimed at protecting our citizens, civil and military infrastructure from malicious attacks.

More broadly, the EU is taking concrete measures to tackle hybrid threats, for example through the Helsinki Hybrid Centre of Excellence and with a dedicated cyber platform.

Counterterrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism have been top EU priorities over this past year. The UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy and the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism are cornerstones for EU efforts. Following the Council conclusions in June 2017, the current priorities include strengthened cooperation between CSDP missions and operations and Justice and Home Affairs agencies, namely Europol and Frontex, in priority partner countries. We have also mainstreamed Counterterrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism in external policies, such as the European Neighbourhood Policy and the new EU strategy for Iraq, put in place or strengthened dedicated counter-terrorism dialogues with the Western Balkans, Turkey and Middle East and North Africa, strengthened the coordination role of the counter-terrorism and security experts in EU Delegations and promoted prevention and countering of violent extremism through the Radicalisation Awareness Network. Improved information-sharing between CSDP and Justice and Home Affairs actors has been given particular prominence, with progress made in developing a pilot project for a Crime Information Cell located within a CSDP operation (EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia) to test integration of internal and external instruments at field level more systematically. In July 2018, the EEAS and Commission Services will jointly report back on progress in implementing this strategic guidance from the Council.

2. NEW EU EXTERNAL BUDGET PROPOSAL: MORE RESOURCES, SIMPLIFICATION, FLEXIBILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND DEMOCRATIC SCRUTINY

In the world of today there is a growing demand for a strong, reliable, predictable, and active European Union. This is why the Commission has proposed for the next seven years a budget for external action increased by about 30% compared to the current financial period.

It is a recognition that the common work at European level on external action brings results that no single member state alone can achieve on a global scale, be it on security, be it on crisis management, be it on humanitarian aid, be it on development be it on migration and climate change, be it on trade.

It also acknowledges that in our increasingly connected world, external assistance is an effective tool for projecting and defending both our values and interests when supporting people abroad in getting a better life and countries seeking to address poverty or instability and other challenges.

The proposal of the **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)**, adopted on 14 June 2018, aims to give the EU more coherence in its work, a greater ability to make strategic choices on how and where to provide support, better matching funding with political priorities and a greater flexibility to react swiftly to unforeseen crises on the global stage.

3. PROMOTING PUBLIC DIPLOMACY & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

The EU is stepping up the **fight against deliberate disinformation**, also through international cooperation. The EU's Strategic Communication has focused on the Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods as well as the Western Balkans, establishing specific task forces to promote effective strategic communication and public diplomacy.

To the East, the EU Task Force helped to raise awareness of the tangible benefits of EU engagement for citizens of the Eastern Partnership countries. An example in Georgia is the engagement with the Orthodox clergy which helped shift towards more positive public attitudes about the EU and its values. **In the South, the Task Force increased its cooperation with the Global Coalition against Da'esh by sharing positive narratives on Iraq and Syria.** Ahead of the second Brussels conference on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the region" a social media campaign focused on Syrian people and empowering them to tell their own stories. To enhance the EU's engagement in the Western Balkans, recalling our common culture, **we designed and launched an online itinerary, the 'EU-Western Balkans Cultural Heritage Route'**, which connects and highlights cultural events (co)organised by the EU Delegations in the region.

Through public diplomacy the European Union is working to build trust and mutual understanding worldwide. Thanks to the ongoing effort to work across EU institutions, with Member States and partner countries a more joined-up approach to public diplomacy, as outlined in the EU Global Strategy, is becoming a reality.



LOOKING AHEAD

In an increasingly uncertain world, the European Union has a duty to invest even more in its own strength, reliability and credibility. This is what our citizens need and our partners demand. We have now started to work on all the EU Global Strategy's priorities. In the coming year we will push the implementation forward, while we also consolidate and protect our achievements.

On security and defence, the building blocks of a European Security and Defence Union have been laid down. The challenge now is to ensure coherence between the different initiatives launched, credibility by delivering on the commitments made, and concrete action stemming from the steps forward made.

When it comes to resilience, the integrated approach and cooperative regional orders, the first and foremost priority is to seal tangible results in the Western Balkans, both as regards resilience and reconciliation in the region, as well as its European perspective. On migration, we have created new partnerships and new instruments that are delivering substantial results: we need to make sure we consolidate and strengthen them. Finally, at the global level, at a time in which multilateralism is under attack, the EU has a prime responsibility to double down on its work to safeguard a rules-based global governance, ranging from its steadfast defence of the Iran nuclear deal to the implementation of the Paris climate agreement, to strengthening the international trade architecture by supporting adherence to the World Trade Organisation's rules and to their reform where needed, and by concluding the bilateral and interregional trade agreements with our partners in Asia and the Americas.

It has been a year of important achievements. But in our difficult world, there is no time for complacency. We have set up new tools, and we must now make full use of them. We are more engaged in the world as a Union, and we must keep a straight bar if we want our citizens to fully perceive the benefits of our common action. The potential of the Global Strategy has not been fully exploited yet. We are already back to work.



More information:
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