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- Council Conclusions (17 June 2019)

Delegations will find in the Annex the Council Conclusions on Security and Defence in the context of the EU Global Strategy, adopted by the Council at its 3700th meeting held on 17 June 2019.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EU GLOBAL STRATEGY

Introduction

1. Since the launch of the EU Global Strategy in June 2016, the EU has taken ground-breaking steps forward in the area of security and defence. The Council welcomes the substantive progress made to enhance the security of the Union and its role as a security provider and global actor, including through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Today's complex and evolving threats and challenges require a comprehensive EU response, across the nexus between internal and external security as well as using the integrated approach to conflicts and crises.
2. The Council underlines the need to maintain the momentum through continued engagement of Member States and EU institutions. Ensuring a consistent implementation of the actions launched is necessary to effectively deliver on the EU Level of Ambition, agreed by the Council in November 2016, of strengthening our capacity to respond to external conflicts and crises, build partners' capacities and protect the EU and its citizens. It recalls the guidance provided by the European Council in this regard on several occasions as well as previous Council conclusions.

3. The Council therefore calls for a coherent and output-oriented implementation of the security and defence initiatives – in particular the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), using the revised Capability Development Plan (CDP) and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), as well as the Civilian CSDP Compact and the agreed reinforcement of civilian and military structures – together with the important new instruments that the EU is preparing for the next Multiannual Financial Framework – including the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the Military Mobility envelope of the Connecting Europe Facility. In addition, the proposed off-budget European Peace Facility is being considered by Member States. It also highlights the important contribution of the Athena mechanism and looks forward to the completion of its ongoing review. It underscores the importance of sufficient expertise in the EU institutions to ensure the effective implementation of these initiatives and instruments.

4. By addressing Europe's current and future security and defence needs, the EU is enhancing its capacity to act as a security provider, its strategic autonomy and its ability to cooperate with partners. The Council calls for further strategic reflection on these matters with the aim of taking more responsibility for European security with partners wherever possible and alone when necessary, in the pursuit of EU values and interests. This would require inter alia a shared assessment of threats and challenges, ensuring adequate resources in line with PESCO commitments thereby increasing the capacity and capabilities needed to implement EU decisions effectively and coherently, as well as a more integrated, sustainable, innovative and competitive European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) throughout the Union, which remains open for cooperation. The Council reiterates, in line with its November 2017 conclusions, that this will also strengthen our collective efforts, in particular also in the context of the transatlantic relationship, and will enhance the European contribution to a rules-based global order with the UN at its core and to Euro-Atlantic security.

5. In this context, the Council recalls its conclusions on reinforcing the UN-EU strategic partnership on peace operations and crisis management of September 2018, highlights the long-standing UN-EU cooperation on peace-keeping and civilian, police and military crisis management and underlines the importance of continuing the close cooperation between the EU and the UN.

The Council recalls that the swift and demonstrable implementation of the two Joint Declarations on EU-NATO cooperation signed in Warsaw in July 2016 and in Brussels in July 2018 by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization remains a key political priority with the overall objective of building a genuine organisation-to-organisation relationship by working with and for the benefits of all Member States. The Council welcomes the continued close and mutually reinforcing cooperation with NATO in areas of shared interest, in full respect of the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of both organisations.

In this context, the Council today:

CSDP missions and operations

6. Highlights the significant contribution of the CSDP missions and operations to international peace and stability, as an essential part of the EU's integrated approach to conflicts and crises. The EU presently deploys ten civilian CSDP missions and six military CSDP operations across three continents in which around 4.500 men and women are currently deployed. It expresses its appreciation for the work carried out by all the civilian and military personnel participating in them. It encourages Member States to provide the necessary means and personnel for these missions and operations to carry out their tasks effectively. It recalls that the EU has a strong expertise across all operational domains, including a presence in maritime strategic areas, and calls in particular for a strategic reflection on the EU's overall maritime presence, taking into account the EU Maritime Security Strategy and the related action plan for its implementation.

7. Recalls its conclusions of November 2018 with regard to the objective for 2020 of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) and stresses that it should be provided with the necessary human resources, to be built up in a gradual, sufficient and timely manner. It reiterates as well the close civilian-military coordination between the MPCC and its civilian counterpart, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), through the Joint Support Coordination Cell (JSCC).

Climate change

8. Underlines the importance environmental issues and climate change have for security and defence, as outlined in the Council conclusions on Climate Diplomacy of February 2019. The Council also welcomes the increased climate sensitivity of EU actions on conflict prevention and sustainable security and emphasises the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies. It acknowledges the relevance of climate change for CSDP missions and operations, including its impact on military capability planning and development. The Council looks forward to taking work further and enhancing cooperation among different actors on all relevant work strands in the area of security and defence, namely by considering the impact of climate change within the assessment of global threats and challenges.

Civilian CSDP Compact

9. Recalls its adoption of the Civilian CSDP Compact, along with the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, in November 2018, and reaffirms this commitment to make civilian CSDP more capable, more effective, flexible and responsive, as well as more joined up with other EU actors and policies and with partners. It highlights the importance of ensuring full and coherent implementation across these three clusters.
10. Looks forward to the first Annual Review Conference foreseen in the second half of 2019 to take stock of progress of the implementation of the Compact across the three clusters at both national level, based on the National Implementation Plans, and the EU level, based on the Joint Action Plan.

11. Welcomes the work done on the Joint Action Plan by the EEAS and Commission services in which they describe the range of actions to be undertaken at the EU-level to support the implementation of the Civilian CSDP Compact. It notes that work to implement the Joint Action Plan has already commenced and in this regard calls upon the EEAS and Commission services to produce concrete deliverables by the Annual Review Conference.
12. Following the Annual Review Conference on Civilian CSDP, the Council will revert in November to give political guidance and provide direction for the way ahead.

Coherence

13. Welcomes the report by the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission/Head of the Agency on the interactions, links and coherence among EU defence initiatives (CARD, PESCO, EDF) that contribute to the fulfilment of the EU's Level of Ambition in security and defence as derived from the EU Global Strategy, and thus to strengthening the Union's ability to take more responsibility as a security provider. The Council underlines that this report is the start of a continuous endeavour to ensure coherence among EU defence initiatives, based on an inclusive process involving all EU Member States.
14. Highlights in this regard the good progress made, together with Member States, in ensuring that these initiatives, while being distinct and having different legal bases, are consistent and mutually reinforcing, drawing also on the close coordination between the supporting institutions and bodies at EU level (Commission, EEAS, EDA).

15. Calls for continuous efforts, along the lines set out in the report, to further increase synergies between EU defence initiatives and enhance coordination between the relevant EU actors, with a view to increasing the efficiency and output of defence cooperation aimed at enhancing European capabilities. Recalling in this context that, as agreed in its conclusions of June 2018, the EU Capability Development Priorities, which take into account the CSDP military capability shortfalls, long-term capability and technological trends, Member States' defence plans, and lessons learned from CSDP missions and operations, provide a key reference for Member States' and EU's capability development, the Council looks forward to receiving the related Strategic Context Cases after their endorsement by the EDA Steering Board at the end of June 2019.
16. Highlights the need to further reinforce coherence in the timelines of the different processes to further develop interactions, while at the same time encouraging Member States to embed EU defence initiatives in national defence planning processes. EU institutions and bodies are encouraged to facilitate, where possible, consistency relating to Member States' reporting and support them in this regard.
17. Encourages the further strengthening of the link between capability development and the operational availability of forces for CSDP missions and operations, also in view of the PESCO commitments.
18. Invites the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission/Head of the European Defence Agency to keep promoting the coherent implementation of the defence initiatives (CARD, PESCO, EDF) in close coordination with Member States and involving close cooperation between the EEAS, Commission services and the EDA.

19. Agrees to revert to the issue in November 2019 to assess the progress made including on the basis of further input from Member States, in view of a second report from the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission/Head of the Agency on coherence in May 2020. On the basis of this report, the Council will provide guidance on improving links and synergies between relevant defence initiatives aimed at fulfilling the Union's Level of Ambition.

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)

In the framework of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO):

20. Welcomes the completion of the first annual PESCO cycle as well as the progress made by participating Member States in fulfilling the more binding commitments, notably those related to defence budgets, joint defence investment and the initial use of EU tools, initiatives and instruments in national defence planning, such as the CDP, CARD and EDIDP, and invites participating Member States to make significant progress to further address the more binding commitments in other areas, as set out in the Recommendation which the Council adopted on 14 May 2019, based on the first Annual Report by the High Representative on the status of PESCO implementation.
21. Recalls that the participating Member States will advance the work and focus on the swift and effective implementation of the existing 34 PESCO projects and encourages them to jointly submit new project proposals, which will be assessed on, amongst other criteria, the level of maturity of the project proposal and an initial overview of its financial and other necessary resources, no later than 31 July 2019, bearing in mind the guidance provided in the Recommendation adopted on 14 May, in view of updating the Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1797 in November 2019. The Council further emphasises that projects to be implemented under PESCO focus on developing defence capabilities and improving the operational availability of forces. It is recalled that project members have the possibility to involve the Commission, as appropriate, in the proceedings of the project, in line with the governance rules for PESCO projects.

22. In line with the Council conclusions of 13 November 2017 and of 18 November 2018, recognises that a third State could, and would need to, provide substantial added value to the PESCO projects, contribute to strengthening PESCO and the CSDP and meet more demanding commitments, while fully respecting the principle of decision-making autonomy of the EU and its Member States. In this context, the Council looks forward to the adoption as soon as possible of a Council Decision on the general conditions under which third States could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects, in accordance with Articles 4(2)(g) and 9 of the Council Decision establishing PESCO, the guidance provided in the PESCO notification as well as the Council Decision on the common set of governance rules.

CARD

23. Looks forward to the launch of the first full CARD cycle starting with CARD bilateral dialogues in September 2019, with a view to providing to Ministers in Autumn 2020 a comprehensive review on the state of the European capability landscape. Taking benefit of the upcoming Strategic Context Cases, the CARD will also identify, with the involvement of relevant stakeholders, further cooperative opportunities that will support the implementation of the agreed EU Capability Development Priorities, which also include the High Impact Capability Goals, with a view to developing a coherent set of usable, deployable, interoperable and sustainable capabilities.

24. Acknowledges that the coherence of output between the CARD, as well as the Capability Development Plan, and respective NATO processes, such as the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP), has been and will continue to be ensured where requirements overlap and while recognising the different nature of the two organisations and their respective responsibilities.

European Defence Fund

25. Looks forward to the swift adoption and implementation of the European Defence Fund, following the common understanding reached in February by the European Parliament and the Council on the related Regulation and once an overall agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027 is reached. The Council stresses the importance of the Fund in helping to enhance the competitiveness, efficiency and innovation capacity of the EDTIB throughout the Union. The Council also welcomes the foreseen role of the EDF in promoting disruptive technologies for defence.
26. Welcomes the progress made on the implementation of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP, 2019-2020), notably the adoption in March of its multiannual work programme, which identifies categories of projects involving European cross-border cooperation and targets cooperative projects with EU added value, and the publication of the call for proposals in April of this year. In this regard, the Council looks forward to the submission of proposals for ambitious projects in line with the EDIDP award criteria.
27. Welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR, 2017-2019) as well as the adoption of its 2019 work programme and the publication of the related call for proposals.

Single set of Forces

28. Recalls that, as Member States only have a 'single set of forces' which they can use in different frameworks, the development of Member States' defence capabilities in the EU framework will thus also help to strengthen these capabilities, potentially available to other frameworks, including the United Nations and NATO.

EU-NATO cooperation

29. Reiterating its conclusions of 6 December 2016, 19 June 2017, 5 December 2017 and 19 November 2018 and European Council conclusions of December 2018 and considering that the EU and NATO have shared values and continue to face common security challenges, welcomes the fourth progress report submitted jointly by the High Representative/Vice President/Head of Agency and the Secretary General of NATO on the implementation of the common set of proposals (a total of 74 actions) highlighting key achievements, including in the areas of political dialogue, military mobility, countering hybrid threats, parallel and coordinated exercises, as well as defence capabilities.
30. In this context, welcomes the increased level of political dialogue between the two organisations, in both formal and informal settings, as an essential tool for further strengthening mutual understanding, building confidence and ensuring transparency, as well as Member States' strong engagement, and looks forward to continue mutual cross-briefings in a balanced way. In addition, the Council stresses the importance of the Parallel and Coordinated Exercise (PACE) concept and encourages both the EU and NATO to continue these exercises in a more structured way based on the lessons identified in 2017 and 2018. It invites the High Representative, in close cooperation with the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council and in consultation with NATO, to present a proposal for the future of the PACE concept. Furthermore, the Council welcomes the ongoing efforts of the EU and NATO for coordinating their activities on security and defence capacity building for partner countries and encourages further discussion on deepening the cooperation in this field. The Council also welcomes strengthened cooperation on counter-terrorism. Recognising the importance of continuous operational and tactical cooperation on the ground, the Council underlines the importance of ensuring interoperability, especially in the context of crisis management operations.

31. Acknowledging the important steps forward on situational awareness provided by parallel and coordinated intelligence analyses, the Council also appreciates the significant progress in countering hybrid threats achieved by the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki. The Centre continues to provide support in key areas such as training and exercising through dedicated educational events for EU Member States and NATO Allies alike. The Council also stresses the need to enhance cooperation between EU and NATO on cyber defence.
32. Underlines the importance of unimpeded exchange of information between EU and NATO, in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner, for strengthening and further enhancing the cooperation between the two organisations, following the good examples in the field of military mobility. In this regard, drawing upon the lessons learned from the pilot implementation of the PACE concept, the Council also encourages an enhanced exchange of unclassified and classified information in future PACE exercises as a first step for the exchange of information in real crisis situations.
33. Reaffirms that EU-NATO cooperation will continue to take place 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 with the full involvement of all Member States. It is based on the principles of inclusiveness and reciprocity without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of any Member State.
34. Recalls that NATO cooperation with the non-NATO EU Member States is an integral part of EU-NATO cooperation. In this regard, the Council welcomes the positive contribution of non-NATO EU Member States to NATO activities. Such activities are an integral part of EU-NATO cooperation and the Council strongly supports their continuation.

35. Recalls that the implementation of the common set of proposals is an on-going and long-term process, requiring sustained commitment and concerted efforts from all stakeholders. In this regard, it invites the High Representative/Vice President/Head of Agency to continue progress on implementation, in close cooperation with Member States, ensuring their full involvement and transparency, and looks forward to receiving the next report, to be submitted jointly in June 2020.

EU-UN

36. Reiterates the EU's firm commitment, alongside its Member States, to a strong United Nations as the bedrock of the multilateral rules-based order, recalls that partnering with the UN contributes to the EU playing its role as a global peace and security actor in support of effective multilateralism and, in this regard, welcomes the progress made as reflected in the implementation report on the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management: Priorities 2019-2021.

Partnerships

37. Stresses the importance of taking forward the cooperation in peace, security and defence with partner organisations and partner countries and underlines the need for a strategic approach on partnerships, in line with the EU Global Strategy and previous Council conclusions. In this context, it welcomes the 2018 annual report on CSDP cooperation with partner countries.

Article 42.7 TEU and Article 222 TFEU

38. The Council invites Member States to discuss the lessons identified following the first activation of Article 42.7 TEU and recalls the importance of Mutual Assistance and/or Solidarity in line with Article 42.7 TEU and Article 222 TFEU. The Council recalls that NATO, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation. The specific character of the security and defence policy of all EU Member States will be fully respected.

Countering hybrid threats

39. While stressing that hybrid threats have a multifaceted and an ever-evolving nature, and recalling that the primary responsibility for countering hybrid threats lies with Member States, welcomes the Report on the implementation of the Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats (2016) and the Joint Communication on Increasing Resilience and Bolstering Capabilities to address Hybrid Threats (2018). The implementation of both the Joint Framework and the Joint Communication advanced at good pace, reinforced after the Salisbury attack, in particular on situational awareness, strategic communication, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks, cyber security and counter-intelligence. The Council also welcomes the progress made regarding the hybrid risk survey conducted in Member States (action 1 of the Joint Framework) and invites the Commission and the EEAS to highlight vulnerabilities identified through this action in line with its conclusions of 6 June 2019.
40. Welcomes the increasing array of possible response measures at EU level, including the setting up of the autonomous cyber sanctions regime as part of the cyber diplomacy toolbox and the autonomous sanctions regime against the use of chemical weapons.
41. Welcomes a coordinated response to disinformation through the Action Plan against Disinformation and the creation of the Rapid Alert System together with Member States to improve information sharing. The Council calls on the Commission and the High Representative for continued and coordinated efforts to safeguard the Union's democratic systems and to combat the immediate and long-term threats posed by disinformation, as an integral part of strengthening the EU's resilience against hybrid threats.

42. Stresses that further work is foreseen for both Member States and the EU to strengthen their resilience and establish the whole of society and the whole of government approaches, as well as to bolster their capabilities to address hybrid threats, including in the areas of cyber security, strategic communication and counter-intelligence. This work should be coordinated and enhanced across all relevant policy sectors, including the internal-external security nexus. While taking into account the EU's own autonomous analysis capability, the Council also stresses the importance of further bolstering Member States' resilience and that of partners, in close cooperation with partners such as NATO.
43. Looks forward to further improving situational awareness, in particular through the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell.
44. Calls for further joint efforts to protect the EU institutions and bodies, their information, communication networks and decision-making processes against hostile activities of malicious actors.

Cyber defence

45. Underlines that, in order to respond to evolving security challenges, the EU and its Member States have to strengthen and to further develop robust cyber security and cyber defence capabilities, taking advantage inter alia of the related upcoming Cyber Defence Strategic Context Case. The Council stresses that cyberspace is an important domain of operations, and that EU missions and operations are increasingly dependent on uninterrupted access to a secure cyberspace.
46. Welcomes progress in the implementation of the EU Cyber Defence Policy Framework and encourages further work, by supporting the development of cyber defence capabilities of EU Member States as well as the strengthening of the cyber protection of the EU security and defence infrastructure.

Situational awareness

47. Welcomes the progress made in enhancing the capabilities of the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) as the functional framework for cooperation between the EU Intelligence Analysis and Situation Centre and the Intelligence Directorate of the European Union Military Staff, to significantly increase European situational awareness. The Council also stresses the valuable contribution of the EU Satellite Centre to this effort.
48. Calls for an even more continuous support of SIAC by the Member States with analysis products from their intelligence services, and encourages to explore how lessons learned from recent EU defence cooperation improvements could be of use for the further enhancement of cooperation in EU intelligence analysis and situational awareness.

Energy challenges

49. Calls for strengthening cooperation in tackling energy security challenges, including via energy efficiency, renewable energy solutions and the protection of critical energy infrastructure. Welcomes all progress achieved in the context of the Consultation Forum on Sustainable Energy in the Defence and Security Sector (CF SEDSS) since its launch in 2016 and looks forward to the next phase of the CF SEDSS as announced in Bucharest on 12 June 2019. Invites Member States, the EEAS, the Commission and the EDA to develop concrete solutions within the defence sector for safe and sustainable energy models leading to increased resilience and operational efficiency also in the context of climate change in line with relevant Council conclusions.

Military Mobility

50. Recalling its conclusions of 25 June 2018 and 19 November 2018, welcomes the ongoing implementation of efforts in improving military mobility both at the EU level and by the Member States, in a coherent and coordinated manner and in close cooperation with NATO as part of the framework of the implementation of the Joint Declarations. It reiterates the importance of maintaining the engagement by the Member States and all relevant national authorities, in full respect of their national sovereignty, decision-making, laws and regulations, including on military movements, transport infrastructure investments and environmental rules and principles. Any decision will be taken on a case by case basis and following the full involvement by all relevant national authorities.
51. Calls for the advancement of the related PESCO projects as well as the fulfilment of the four measures at national level by the end of 2019, as agreed in the Council conclusions on security and defence of 25 June 2018, in particular paragraph 18 of those conclusions. The Council will review and assess as soon as possible the progress achieved on the implementation of these four national measures including by defining, if possible, more ambitious time-bound objectives. In this regard, the Council also calls for close coordination between the EU and NATO to define similar roles and responsibilities for the National Points of Contact for Military Mobility, and also to coordinate closely on the customs-related activities, including digitalisation.

52. Welcomes the first Progress Report on the implementation of the Action Plan on Military Mobility by the High Representative and the Commission, including the good progress and tangible results in key areas. In particular, the Military Requirements for Military Mobility within and beyond the EU, approved by the Council in November 2018, were jointly analysed by the Commission and the EEAS/EUMS in order to identify the gaps between the military requirements and the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) parameters, taking into account the feasibility, the existing equipment and technical viability, financial and engineering considerations as well as geographical realities. Taking into account the gap analysis, the Council looks forward to the swift update of the technical and geographical military requirements. The updated Military Requirements will then provide the basis for the Commission's further work on the definition of the dual-use transport infrastructure requirements in cooperation and consultation with the Member States.
53. Notes that on 2 May 2018, the Commission proposed a 6.5 billion EUR military mobility envelope as part of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) in 2021-2027 to co-fund civilian-military dual-use transport infrastructure projects. It further notes that on 7 March 2019, the co-legislators reached a common understanding on the CEF Regulation text with the necessary provisions for dual-use project funding in place, which will ensure that actions will address both the TEN-T and the sections and nodes identified by Member States in the Annexes to the Military Requirements. The financial allocations for the CEF will be finalised as part of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 negotiations.
54. Furthermore, the CEF Regulation text foresees that the Commission will adopt an implementing act specifying the infrastructure requirements applicable to dual-use infrastructure (useful for both civilian and military purposes). In this regard, the Council calls on the Commission to fully involve the Member States, the EEAS and all relevant stakeholders when drafting this implementing act. It also reiterates the engagement of the Member States in identifying the necessary upgrades of the existing or new transport infrastructure by the end of 2020.

55. Welcomes the progress achieved on actions being implemented in the EDA framework as regards cross-border movement permissions, national legal frameworks, transport of dangerous goods as well as customs; welcomes in this context the launch of the ad hoc programme on cross-border movement permissions procedures in Europe.
 56. Encourages the further implementation of the Action Plan on Military Mobility, notably: the amendment to the EU customs legislation, the swift adoption of the Commission's proposal related to the value added tax (VAT) and excise duty treatment of defence efforts within the Union framework, and actions related to the transport of dangerous goods.
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