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EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



Crisis Management and Planning Directorate

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**Progress report  
on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by NATO and  
EU Councils on 6 December 2016**

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 with a view to giving new impetus and new substance to the NATO-EU strategic partnership. It outlined seven concrete areas where cooperation between the two organizations should be enhanced.

On 6 December 2016, on the basis of the Joint Declaration, both EU and NATO Councils, in separate, parallel processes, endorsed a common set of 42 proposals for implementation. Responding to the tasking by the Ministers of both Organisations to report on a bi-annual basis, this is the first progress report on the implementation of the proposals.

Cooperation between the two organisations is essential. In the current strategic environment, EU and NATO are faced with unprecedented challenges: neither organization has the full range of tools to address these security challenges on its own. Activities of the two organizations are complementary to each other. At the same time, EU-NATO cooperation constitutes an integral pillar of the EU's work aimed at strengthening European security and defence which also contributes to Trans-Atlantic burden sharing. A stronger EU and a stronger NATO are mutually reinforcing.

EU-NATO cooperation is being built on strong foundations: our shared values and principles and the commonality of our interests.

Our joint work undertaken over the past year has delivered substantial results. We have witnessed a change in the culture, quality and dynamics of our engagement. We recognize that there should be no artificial barriers and that all issues of common interest or concern should be addressed. We have made substantial progress in opening our activities to each other, thus gaining better knowledge and understanding of each other. The key impact of the common set of proposals and their implementation is that cooperation between the two organizations is now becoming the established norm, a daily practice, fully corresponding to the new level of ambition referred to in the Joint Declaration. The endorsement of the common set of proposals by Member States and Allies provides a solid basis for enhanced interaction and is a manifestation of ownership: this gives us and our staffs a powerful mandate to pursue this cooperation.

We are convinced that in the space of a few months we have achieved tangible results in the implementation of all proposals. The degree of progress depends on the specific nature of the action: while some are focused on concrete short-term deliverables, others are more process-oriented and longer-term.

As regards implementation, the following specific actions can be highlighted:

- Our cooperation on countering hybrid threats is now more important than ever. Ten out of the forty-two proposals are linked to the fight against hybrid threats. EU and NATO, along with Member States and Allies, will contribute to and participate in the activities of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats set up in Helsinki. Better situational awareness is critical for our work to counter hybrid threats effectively. The establishment of the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell and its interaction with the newly created NATO Hybrid Analysis Cell will help us draw up a shared situational picture. The first ever Joint Intelligence Assessment on a hybrid topic between EU and NATO will soon be made available. Collaboration between our strategic communications teams will also help convey the message that we stand united, notably in support of our Eastern partners and in delivering coordinated messages including in the Western Balkans. Information on resilience requirements has been exchanged and the two organisations are looking into ways in which they can better support individual nations.
- Cooperation and coordination between Operations Sophia and Sea Guardian have been enhanced through regular information sharing and logistical support. This builds on cooperation in the Aegean Sea and experience acquired in the Indian Ocean. Work is ongoing in order to identify how Sea Guardian can support Sophia in implementing UNSCR 2292 on the arms embargo on Libya.
- Recent coordinated cyber-attacks across the globe demonstrated the need to tackle vulnerabilities of our societies and institutions. The exchange of concepts on the integration of cyber defence aspects into the planning and conduct of missions and operations has opened the door to an increased sharing of relevant concepts. Cooperation on training and education has been developed with a view to reinforce complementarity. Closer interaction of respective emergency response teams and cooperation on cyber exercises is also progressing.
- Member States and Allies have one single set of forces. On defence capabilities, staffs are increasing efforts to ensure coherence of output between the NATO Defence Planning Process and the EU Capability Development Plan (CDP). Complementarity of multinational projects/programmes developed in EU or NATO context is pursued with concrete results such as in the area of Air-to-Air Refuelling. Close cooperation has been also established on capability enablers such as on standardisation, as well as on Military Aviation with the approval of the Military Aviation Strategy in the context of the Single European Sky.
- On defence industry and research, NATO and EU have established a mechanism for interaction to further develop a dialogue on industrial aspects, with focus on specific areas of common interest such as Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME).
- For the first time, NATO and the EU staffs will exercise together their response to a hybrid scenario. Preparations regarding EU's active involvement in CMX 17 through PACE-17 have well advanced. The exercise is expected to test the implementation of over a third of the common proposals. The EU is preparing to reciprocate in a similar fashion, assuming a leading role in 2018 for the parallel and coordinated exercise.

# EEAS(2017) 729 REV 1

## *Limited*

- Assisting our partners in building their capacities and fostering resilience, in particular in the Western Balkans, and in our Eastern and Southern neighbourhood is our common objective. Cooperation on the ground and at Headquarters level in this respect has strengthened substantially. Key areas of interaction have been identified such as strategic communications, cyber, ammunition storage and safety in three pilot countries, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova and Tunisia as first step. In this context, the EU is planning to allocate funds as a contribution to NATO's Building Integrity Programme, which aims at reducing the risk of corruption and promoting good governance in the defence and security sectors.
- Overall, as a result of a clear political commitment, bilateral dialogue has been expanded through a consolidated practice of high level invitations to relevant Ministerial meetings, the holding of formal and informal NAC-PSC meetings and intensified cross-briefings on issues of mutual interest.

Cooperation between NATO and the EU is implemented in line with the mandates given by the EU and NATO Councils. Most of the daily work is carried through staff-to-staff contacts and continued dialogue. This is a pragmatic and practical cooperation demonstrating the clear cultural shift in our daily interaction.

While this report is focused on implementation of the 42 proposals, our next report – to be submitted to the respective Councils in December 2017 – will offer an opportunity to consider possibilities to expand cooperation. With a view to further developing and strengthening this collaboration, we need the fullest engagement and support by all NATO Allies and EU Member States.

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