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Delegations will find attached the Council Conclusions on Security and Defence as approved on 17 June 2020 by written procedure.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE

1. The EU is facing an already challenging international environment in which the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic risks amplifying existing global fragilities and tensions. This calls for more European unity, solidarity and resilience, with Member States working together for a strong European Union that promotes peace and security and protects its citizens, thereby reinforcing the European identity and its independence, in line with the Treaties.
2. The EU remains committed to enhance its ability to act as a security provider through its operational engagement, notably CSDP missions and operations, to reinforce its resilience and preparedness to effectively tackle all security threats and challenges, and to step up the development of necessary capabilities. In doing so, the EU will enhance its strategic autonomy and its ability to cooperate with partners in order to safeguard its values and interests. This will also strengthen our collective efforts, in particular also in the context of effective multilateralism and the transatlantic relationship, and will enhance the European contribution to a rules-based global order with the United Nations at its core and to Euro-Atlantic security.
3. To achieve this, the EU and its Member States should allocate the necessary financial resources for security and defence both at EU level, as well as at national level following Member States' budgetary processes, which could also strengthen the economic recovery in particular in critical sectors in the EU.

In this context, the Council underlines the need to move forward with all the initiatives launched and taskings given since 2016 as a follow-up to the EU Global Strategy and in particular:

4. Invites the High Representative, in close cooperation with and building on input from Member States, to present by the end of 2020 through the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity a comprehensive, 360 degrees analysis of the full range of threats and challenges, which will provide the background for the Member States to develop a Strategic Compass document to be adopted by the Council in 2022. The Commission and the European Defence Agency will be associated as appropriate in the process. The Strategic Compass will enhance and guide the implementation of the Level of Ambition agreed in November 2016 in the context of the EU Global Strategy and could further contribute to develop the common European security and defence culture, informed by our shared values and objectives and which respects the specific character of the security and defence policies of the Member States. Building on the threat analysis and other possible thematic input, the Strategic Compass will define policy orientations and specific goals and objectives in areas such as crisis management, resilience, capability development and partnerships. The ongoing work on the security and defence initiatives will also feed into this process while the Strategic Compass should provide a coherent guidance for these initiatives and other relevant processes.
5. Expresses its appreciation for the valuable contribution of the armed forces in support of civilian authorities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including between EU Member States. In light of this experience and lessons identified, the Council invites the Commission together with the High Representative to propose possible updates of the modalities for the use, availability and coordination of Member States' military assets and capabilities in support of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism as well as for humanitarian assistance purposes, respecting agreed principles and Member States' competences and taking into account the relevant implementation modalities of Article 222 TFEU.

6. Reiterates the importance of mutual assistance and/or solidarity, in line with Article 42(7) TEU and Article 222 TFEU, and agrees to continue building a common understanding of Article 42(7) TEU and identifying lessons, building on table top exercises and scenario-based policy discussions in the months ahead. These exercises and discussions should have a focus on practical modalities for its implementation, including scenarios relevant to Article 222 TFEU, also taking into account the vulnerabilities shown by the COVID-19 crisis, and with the involvement of the Commission as necessary. This may also include an assessment by the relevant services of the type of assistance that they could provide, if so requested by a Member State in the context of an activation of Article 42(7) TEU. The Council recalls that obligations for Member States stemming from Article 42(7) TEU are without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States. It recalls as well that NATO remains the foundation of the collective defence for those States which are members of it.
7. Encourages EU institutions, together with the Member States, to further work, in line with the June 2019 European Council Conclusions, to enhance the resilience and the security culture of the EU against cyber and hybrid threats, and to develop and strengthen the security of its information and communication networks and systems, including the secure communication channels, and its decision-making processes, from malicious activities of all kinds to ensure the EU's ability to remain fully functional also in less permissive circumstances.

Stresses the increased importance of further strengthening the EU's ability to prevent, discourage, deter and respond to malicious cyber activities, inter alia through the Framework for a Joint EU Diplomatic Response to Malicious Cyber Activities (“cyber diplomacy toolbox”), including, if necessary, the horizontal EU autonomous cyber sanctions regime, as well as the EU Cyber Defence Policy Framework. The Council also stresses that it is necessary to further integrate cyber aspects within the EU's crisis management.

In line with the 2019 December Council Conclusions on complementary efforts to enhance resilience and counter hybrid threats, the Council also calls for stepping up efforts at national level and regarding EU policies and legislative initiatives to counter hybrid threats, including the spread of disinformation, which have been amplified by the COVID-19 crisis. It also calls for improving the EU's preparedness and its autonomous analysis capacity to deal with hybrid threats and to help increase partners' resilience.

8. Invites the High Representative to propose, together with the Commission and the European Defence Agency, and in close dialogue with Member States, a set of concrete short-, medium-, and long-term actions addressing the links between defence and climate change as part of the wider climate-security nexus, notably in the areas of civilian and military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), capability development, multilateralism and partnerships.
9. Recalls the commitment of the European Union and its Member States to the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, ensuring that it is fully integrated into all EU policies and efforts.

Strengthening EU operational engagement

10. Highlights the key contribution of all civilian and military CSDP missions and operations to global peace and stability in the framework of the EU's Integrated Approach to external conflicts and crises as well as to European security. The Council emphasises the need for Member States to provide the necessary means and personnel to all CSDP missions and operations, to ensure the effective implementation of their agreed mandates. In this regard, it invites the High Representative to present options for enhanced follow-up, including at political level, and incentives to improve the force generation for CSDP missions and operations, to be discussed among Member States. It also encourages Member States to fill the remaining gaps in the roster of the EU Battlegroups, which are an important operational and rapid response capacity for the EU. It furthermore stresses the importance of efficient command, control and support structures, including a reinforced Mission Support Platform, and looks forward to the forthcoming review of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), including the Joint Support and Coordination Cell (JSCC).

11. It calls for the urgent return of personnel, temporarily withdrawn from the area of operation as a precautionary measure during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, in a coordinated manner and theatre by theatre, while providing the necessary resources to ensure duty of care. It underlines the importance of civilian-military coordination as well as the strengthening of internal and external security links and looks forward to discussing operational lessons from the pandemic, also in terms of the preparedness, resilience and the command and control capacities of CSDP structures. Building on this momentum, the Council calls for further work to reinforce the robustness of CSDP military training missions and to further enhance the resilience of CSDP civilian missions, including in areas such as medical evacuation and strategic evacuation.

12. Welcomes the launch of Operation EUNAVFOR MED Irini, with the aim to contribute to peace and stability in Libya by contributing to the implementation of the arms embargo on Libya in accordance with UNSCR 1970 (2011) and subsequent Resolutions, including UNSCR 2292 (2016) and UNSCR 2526 (2020) in an impartial and effective manner through aerial, satellite and naval means. It highlights the important contribution of the EU Satellite Centre to the success of the Operation. It further welcomes the establishment of EUAM RCA, supporting the internal security forces in Central African Republic, welcomes the EU's engagement in South-East Ukraine and the opening of EUAM Ukraine's new field office in Mariupol, and recognises the importance of Operation EUFOR Althea's continued presence. It looks forward to the comprehensive strategic review of the three CSDP missions and operations in the Horn of Africa.

In the context of the strengthening of CSDP missions in the Sahel region, it welcomes the reinforced mandate of EUTM Mali and looks forward to the strategic reviews of EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger. The Council, recalling the Joint declaration of the members of the European Council with the Member States of the G5 Sahel, also welcomes the establishment of the Coalition for the Sahel and the participation of the EU in the Coalition, and highlights EU leadership in coordinating actions in the framework of the Partnership for Stability and Security in the Sahel (P3S).

It recalls the need to also foster European operational engagement while ensuring continuity and synergy with Member States' actions in maritime strategic areas, taking into account the EU's Maritime Security Strategy and the related action plan for its implementation. It looks forward to the launch of the pilot case in the Gulf of Guinea which could pave the way for progress on the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept.

13. Calls for the full implementation of the Civilian CSDP Compact by early summer 2023 at the latest, including the waypoints identified at the Annual Review Conference in November 2019 and endorsed in the Council Conclusions on the Implementation of the Civilian CSDP Compact (December 2019), as well as the ongoing work by Member States on their National Implementation Plans. In that context, it looks forward to the second Annual Review Conference, foreseen for the second half of 2020, to take stock of progress in the implementation of the Compact at EU and national level.
14. Underlines the urgent need to agree an effective European Peace Facility, in which it is proposed to include inter alia the provision of military equipment and strong safeguards measures, to be ready by January 2021, in order to enhance the Union's ability to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security. It also recognises the need for an adequate budgetary envelope for this off-budget instrument, consistent with the Level of Ambition, in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 to be agreed, and underlines the importance of further discussion, in particular on its financial implications.

15. Recalls the importance of the agreed principles of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and encourages the Member States participating in PESCO to implement further the more binding commitments, notably where progress was assessed as not sufficient, in particular regarding the operational domain and the European collaborative approach (e.g. equipment procurement and defence R&T), in light of the High Representative's second annual report on the status of PESCO implementation and in line with the Council Recommendation on this report. In order to make PESCO more effective, the Council looks forward to agreeing by the end of this year on the objectives and tangible results to be achieved for the next PESCO phase (2021-2025), also in preparation of the adaptation of the Council Recommendation of 15 October 2018 concerning the sequencing of the fulfilment of the more binding commitments undertaken in the framework of PESCO and specifying more precise objectives¹. It furthermore encourages the agreement as soon as possible on the Draft Council Decision on the general conditions under which third States could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects. It also calls for a swift start of the negotiations on the review of the Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/909 establishing a common set of governance rules for PESCO projects².

¹ OJ C 374, 16.10.2018, p. 1–7.

² OJ L 161, 26.6.2018, p. 37–41.

16. In line with the second report by the High Representative, acting also in his capacities of Vice-President of the Commission and Head of the European Defence Agency, on interactions, interlinkages and coherence among EU defence initiatives, calls for sustained efforts in further improving coherence between the EU defence initiatives, including with regard to the EU Capability Development Priorities, which include the High Impact Capability Goals (HICG), serving as a key reference for Member States' and the EU's capability development. This should be done while respecting the distinct character and different legal bases of the programmes and initiatives. It also looks forward to the discussion on the regular assessment of the need to revise the EU Capability Development Priorities, taking into account all the necessary input. The Council furthermore strongly encourages Member States to take the EU defence planning tools more into account and make better use of them in their national defence planning processes. It invites the High Representative to prepare a third report on coherence in May/June 2021, based on which the Council will provide further guidance.
17. 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 also help to strengthen the capabilities potentially available to other frameworks, including the United Nations and NATO.
18. Welcomes the effective ongoing implementation of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme and looks forward to the swift adoption of the award decisions on the 2019 calls for proposals. It also welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the Preparatory Action on Defence Research and looks forward to the launch of projects on emerging and disruptive technologies, among others.

19. Calls for the swift adoption and implementation of an ambitious European Defence Fund, consistent with the defence capability priorities commonly agreed by Member States within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Council also calls for adequate funding under the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 to be agreed. It recalls that this should foster the competitiveness, efficiency and innovation capacity of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) throughout the Union, including more sustainable supply chains. It underlines the important role the Fund could play to overcome the consequences of the ongoing economic crisis for the defence sector, including for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and mid-caps, by fostering defence investment and cross-border cooperation. In that context, the Council calls upon the Commission to present proposals for ambitious annual work programmes, with dedicated budgets for projects regarding cross-border SME participation as well as emerging and disruptive technologies, focusing on, amongst others, enablers without prejudice to the annual work programme adopted by the Commission.
20. Welcomes the call for more synergies between civil, and defence industries, including space, in EU programmes, while respecting the different natures and legal bases of respective EU programmes and initiatives, including the civilian nature of European space programmes, with a view to making more effective use of resources and technologies and create economies of scale. It furthermore calls to address the negative consequences of dependencies, as highlighted in the Commission's New Industrial Strategy, while respecting Member States' competences, and screen foreign direct investments within the scope of EU and national law. The Council also calls on the High Representative, the Commission and Member States to further identify synergies and links between the development of Artificial Intelligence and defence related activities, in full respect of applicable international and national law, with a view to fostering a coherent and strategic European approach. It recalls the European Council Conclusions of October 2017, encouraging the European Investment Bank to examine steps with a view to supporting investments in defence research and development activities.

21. Calls for adequate funding for the military mobility envelope in the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) under the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 to be agreed and for ambitious dual-use projects to adapt the transport infrastructure in view of improving both civilian and military mobility. It also urges swift implementation of the Action Plan on Military Mobility at the EU level, looking forward to the next joint progress report by the High Representative and the Commission, as well as continuous efforts by the Member States to improve military mobility within and beyond the EU. In this context, the Council stresses that all Member States should be able to participate in multinational structures, in line with the relevant PESCO commitment.

Reinforcing Partnerships

22. Underlines that the challenging international security environment and in particular the security-related consequences of the current pandemic highlight the importance of further developing the partnerships with international and core regional partner organisations, as well as with partner countries.
23. With a view to further facilitating and enhancing cooperation with partners, also in view of their important and significant contributions to EU CSDP missions and operations, the Council invites the High Representative to present concrete recommendations, in full respect of the Union's decision-making autonomy, for a more strategic approach to EU partnerships on security and defence with third countries by the end of the year. In this regard, the Council also welcomes the 6th annual progress report on the CSDP Cooperation with Partner Countries.

24. Welcomes good progress in the implementation of the 2019-2021 EU-UN priorities on peace operations and crisis management, and in particular in strengthening cooperation between CSDP missions and operations and UN peace operations in the field, in the Women, Peace and Security agenda and with regard to conflict prevention. It also calls for enhanced cooperation with the United Nations in theatres where CSDP missions and operations are deployed alongside UN peace operations, building on the Second Progress Report on the 2019-2021 EU-UN Priorities on Peace Operations and Crisis Management.
25. Welcomes the significant progress achieved on EU-NATO cooperation since the signature of the 2016 Warsaw and 2018 Brussels Joint Declarations, as documented in the fifth progress report submitted jointly by the High Representative/Vice-President/Head of the European Defence Agency and the Secretary General of NATO on the implementation of the common set of proposals. The Council reiterates the importance of enhanced, mutually-reinforcing and beneficial strategic EU-NATO partnership in areas of shared interest, including with regard to key horizontal issues such as the unimpeded exchange of unclassified and classified information, in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner, with the overall objective of building a genuine organisation-to-organisation relationship. The implementation of the Joint Declarations remains a key political priority of the EU and it continues to take place in full respect of the decision-making autonomy and procedures of both organisations, on the basis of the principles of transparency, reciprocity and inclusiveness. In this regard, it welcomes key achievements of cooperation including in the areas of political dialogue, military mobility, counter hybrid threats, including disinformation, as well as cyber security and defence. Furthermore, the Council calls for a coherent response to the implications of the pandemic, including through exercises and increased interactions, in line with the principle of avoiding unnecessary duplication. The Council also calls for swift progress towards a new ambitious Parallel and Coordinated Exercises plan, in order to strengthen resilience and reinforce synergies between the two organisations as a further step towards their closer interaction in real crisis situations. The Council looks forward to further progress in the implementation of the common set of proposals in close cooperation with and the full involvement of all Member States.