Council of the European Union

**Brussels, 9 June 2017
(OR. en)**

10184/17

CFSP/PESC 509	**CSDP/PSDC 312**
CIVCOM 98	**CYBER 96**
CLIMA 182	**DEVGEN 131**
COAFR 176	**ENER 283**
COEST 135	**ENV 603**
COHOM 75	**FIN 360**
COMED 2	**MIGR 101**
CONUN 141	**POLMIL 65**
COPS 186	**PROCIV 55**
COTER 49	**RELEX 316**

COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director
date of receipt:	8 June 2017
To:	Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	JOIN(2017) 21 final
Subject:	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action

Delegations will find attached document JOIN(2017) 21 final.

_____

Encl.: JOIN(2017) 21 final

JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action

{SWD(2017) 226 final}
{SWD(2017) 227 final}

EN

EN

1.   Introduction

The EU and its Member States have established a robust policy framework to guide the Union's external action, anchored in Article 21 of the Treaty and the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy[1] ("EU global strategy"), and linked to commitments they have taken at global and regional level. The challenge now is how to sustain progress in the transformational agenda the EU has set itself, against a backdrop of a more connected, contested and complex global environment. The EU global strategy identifies strengthening state and societal resilience as part of the response to this challenge.

The aim of this Joint Communication is to identify how a strategic approach to resilience can increase the impact of EU external action and sustain progress towards EU development, humanitarian, foreign and security policy objectives, given the more fluid landscape of global challenges and risks that the EU global strategy describes. It recognises the need to move away from crisis containment to a more structural, long-term, non-linear approach to vulnerabilities, with an emphasis on anticipation, prevention and preparedness.

It argues that given the rapidly changing environment, a political approach is needed, underpinned by a coherent mobilisation of political dialogue, the diplomatic resources of the Union and its Member States, EU assistance and sectoral policy dialogue and bilateral initiatives. And it proposes the principles and working methods that need to be put in place to implement it. It builds upon the experience of implementing the 2012 Commission Communication on Resilience[2], which continues to guide relevant EU work, as well as experience drawn from the EU's promotion of resilience when addressing complex domestic policy challenges.

This Joint Communication also recognises that the EU is not insulated from the pressures affecting its external partners, and that EU external policy can make a contribution to strengthening resilience within the Union itself. In that spirit it proposes that proper linkages need to be established between internal and external policy, particularly in relation to the European Agenda on Security.

2.   A strategic approach to resilience in the EU's external action

An ambitious policy framework. There has been an intense effort by the EU over the past few years to re-shape its external policy framework in response to the changing global environment. This new framework comprises multilateral goals such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai

---

[1] "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy". June 2016

[2] "The EU Approach to Resilience – learning from Food Security Crises". COM(2012) 586 final, 3 October 2012

Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Commitments to Action taken at the World Humanitarian Summit, as well as the EU's own major reviews of the European Neighbourhood Policy, of its relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, the European Consensus on Development, and the establishment of a new level of ambition for the EU's security and defence policy. The Rome Declaration has reconfirmed the EU's commitment to a stronger role on the global scene.

A more fluid landscape of global challenges and risks. The EU will be taking forward this agenda in the context of a world where the pace of change is increasingly rapid and the pressures on states, societies, communities and individuals are increasingly disruptive. Pressures, marked by the unprecedented pace of globalisation, range from demographic, climate change, environmental or migratory challenges beyond the power of individual states to confront, to economic shocks, the erosion of societal cohesion due to weak institutions and poor governance, conflict, violent extremism, and acts of external powers to destabilise perceived adversaries. There is constant pressure on the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. And there is vast unmet humanitarian and development need.

Chronic vulnerability and fragility in Europe's wider neighbourhood is exacerbating the impact of these pressures. It is hampering the development of entire regions with potential spill-over beyond their borders.

Fostering resilience to sustain progress. The 2012 Commission Communication on the EU approach to resilience defines resilience as "the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, adapt and quickly recover from stresses and shocks". The EU global strategy takes the concept further. It speaks of resilience as "a broad concept encompassing all individuals and the whole of society" that features "democracy, trust in institutions and sustainable development, and the capacity to reform". Support to resilience at all levels is also an integral part of the new European Consensus on Development.

The EU's strategic approach to resilience aims at achieving and sustaining the ambitious set of objectives for the EU's external action described above, by strengthening:

-        the adaptability of states, societies, communities and individuals to political, economic, environmental, demographic or societal pressures, in order to sustain progress towards national development goals;

-        the capacity of a state - in the face of significant pressures to build, maintain or restore its core functions, and basic social and political cohesion, in a manner that ensures respect for democracy, rule of law, human and fundamental rights and fosters inclusive long-term security and progress;

-        the capacity of societies, communities and individuals to manage opportunities and risks in a peaceful and stable manner, and to build, maintain or restore livelihoods in the face of major pressures.

The ten guiding considerations in Annex identify some of the major methodological insights that will shape this work.

3. Implementing a strategic approach to resilience

Work will be taken forward along the following three interlinked lines:

- expanding the contribution that EU external action can make to strengthening resilience of partner countries and their citizens while consolidating and delivering on existing resilience commitments;

- enriching sectoral policy dialogue with partner countries by drawing upon the EU's experience in promoting resilience in its domestic policy, and its research base;

- ensuring that EU external policy effectively contributes to resilience within the Union.

This work will be grounded in the EU's commitment to democracy and human and fundamental rights.

3.1 Expanding the contribution that EU external action can make to strengthening state, societal and community resilience in partner countries

The EU will continue to implement the 2013-2020 Resilience Action Plan, guided by the 2013 Council Conclusions on an EU approach to resilience. But the EU's resilience approach will expand to address state, societal and community resilience, informed by the new European Consensus on Development. It will place a greater emphasis on addressing protracted crises, the risks of violent conflict and other structural pressures including environmental degradation, climate change, migration and forced displacement.

This approach will be aligned with EU commitments in the 2030 Agenda, notably to "leave no one behind" and the pledge in Sustainable Development Goal 16 to promote "peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions".

Resilience and inclusive and participatory societies

There is a strong body of evidence showing the link between inclusive and participatory societies, with accountable, transparent and democratic institutions, and sustainable development and the prevention of violent conflict. Conversely, shortcomings in governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, gender equality, corruption or the shrinking space for public participation and civil society, pose a fundamental challenge to the effectiveness of any society's development efforts. The quality of governance and public administration determines the performance of a country in all public policy domains, shaping economic prosperity, social and territorial cohesion, and sustainable growth. Resilient

4

societies are underpinned by sustainable and balanced socioeconomic development that anticipates and addresses socioeconomic inequalities, vulnerabilities, and their root causes. This understanding is at the heart of the EU's approach to state and societal resilience.

The EU should:

- *continue to support domestic efforts, tailored to the needs and context of each society, to build sustainable democratic states, accountable and transparent institutions, reform the security sector, strengthen the rule of law, broad-based inclusive growth and employment, participatory decision-making and public access to information. The involvement of local governments, communities and civil society stakeholders will be given particular attention.*

Resilience in practice – building resilience in a post-conflict situation: the case of Nigeria

Addressing vulnerability and fragility in Africa is a global priority, demanding collective action from all stakeholders to address the interlinked challenges of poverty, inequality, conflict, violent extremism and climate threats. Protracted crisis in the region also has significant spill-over effects for the EU.

The EU response to the crisis in Northern Nigeria is an example of a joined-up resilience approach, based on joint analysis (conducted together with the World Bank and UN) and joint strategic planning. A substantial package of assistance will aim to enhance resilience of conflict-affected people and begin reconstruction in North Eastern Nigeria. It builds on the existing emergency response, to gradually move into recovery and rehabilitation, utilising both humanitarian and development funds.

Resilience in practice – resilience and support to our partners in the EU's five guiding principles towards Russia

The internal resilience of the Union is an integral consideration of our external policy towards Russia. The five guiding principles agreed by the Foreign Affairs Council in March 2016 recognise the need to strengthen engagement with a neighbourhood that extends as far as Central Asia. They also identify the need to strengthen the resilience of the EU, in particular on energy security, hybrid threats and strategic communication. They aim to ensure that both the Union and its neighbouring partner countries remain free to make their own political, diplomatic and economic choices, by reducing the scope for external leverage or coercion.

Economic resilience

Economic resilience is a key factor of the overall resilience of a country, and is strongly correlated to other facets of resilience. Enhancing economic resilience includes sound macroeconomic policies. It also requires attention to other factors such as ensuring adequate

5

financing of the infrastructure necessary to provide essential public services, ensuring a more diversified economy with efficient and secure energy supply, and the necessary financial contingency measures, and measures to ensure continuity of business and the protection of vital services and key facilities in the face of shocks.

While macroeconomic stability is essential for social development, macro-level stabilisation and adjustment policies can entail costs. Such pressures can exacerbate existing inequities and societal tensions, particularly when they affect the most vulnerable. Policies need to be designed to mitigate these consequences. The upgrading of statistical and forecasting capacities is a condition to improve policy making and monitoring.

Economic resilience also requires providing the conditions for sustainable and inclusive growth, investment and financing. This starts with a diversified economy that is not overly dependent on single sectors or companies, and has a supportive environment for new businesses and SMEs to grow. The promotion of the circular economy, which reduces resource dependency, can also contribute to this goal. Moreover, giving workers the necessary skills and access to training will help them to adapt to structural changes.

Investment by foreign companies can help countries upgrade their economies, but this needs to be matched with incentives for multinational enterprises to ensure respect for human rights, including labour rights.

The EU should:

- *support partner countries in developing economic resilience underpinned by macroeconomic stability, and accompanied by measures aimed at promoting inclusive growth and mitigating the potential negative transitional impact on some groups in society; particular attention should be given to skills development, creation of decent jobs, social protection, and economic empowerment of disadvantaged groups in this context;*

- *work with the European Investment Bank, other International Financial Institutions (IFIs), business sector organisations and social partners to enhance investment frameworks for economic and social resilience, underpinned by inclusive economic development, job creation and the promotion of business and access to finance; it should make full use of the proposed External Investment Plan in pursuit of this agenda.*

A greater emphasis on needs resulting from protracted crises

The level of humanitarian need related to displacement resulting from violent conflict is the highest ever recorded. Whole regions are stuck in a state of protracted crisis and fragility, where the impact of chronic natural disasters, environmental degradation and conflict

6

intersect and magnify each other. Currently 22% of the world population, or 1.6 billion people[3], live in fragile situations, with the figure expected to rise further by 2030.[4] In addition to the rising numbers of people in humanitarian need, people are affected for longer periods of time. The average duration of displacement is now 17 years. Two thirds of international humanitarian assistance now goes to long-term recipients, as a result of protracted crises or recurrent disasters in the same region.

The traditional linear division of labour between humanitarian aid and development cooperation has been changing in the face of this new reality. Structural fragility, which has both short-term and long-term socioeconomic and political impacts, needs to be addressed more effectively in order to break recurring cycles of emergencies. The EU's current model of addressing crises needs to become better attuned to a situation where poverty, population growth, climate change, rapid urbanisation, competition for limited resources, conflict and violent extremism are creating whole regions of instability.

The EU should:

- *prioritise and enhance close cooperation of EU political, humanitarian and development actors on protracted crises and protracted displacement, while respecting the distinct mandates established by the Treaties, and humanitarian principles;*

- *encourage Governments, through political dialogue, with support from development partners, to take more responsibility for chronic vulnerability and strengthen local capabilities for risk management and an earlier, local response;*

- *mobilise its capacity for diplomatic engagement, sectoral policy dialogue and assistance programming in a coherent way around an improved shared analysis of all factors – including socioeconomic, political and environmental risks that compound vulnerability to existing hazards.*

Resilience in practice - understanding the gender dimension, an example from conflict and disaster policy

Case studies show that climate change, disasters and violent conflict can affect gender groups in different ways. These factors need to be properly understood and addressed in any resilience analysis.

---

[3] OECD(2016), States of Fragility 2016: Understanding violence

[4] One Humanity: Shared Responsibility - Report of the Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, for the World Humanitarian Summit, 2016

7

In some cases disasters and conflicts can underscore patriarchal social norms that disproportionately restrict women and girls' equal access to rights and resources, and they can also create a shift in gender roles and norms.

Women and girls can also play an active and important role in contributing to societal resilience that can underpin peace. Ensuring that women and girls are well informed and actively participate in peace building and recovery efforts not only ensures that their specific needs and capacities are taken into consideration, but can also create a window of opportunity for social change, by challenging traditional gender roles and gender-based discrimination. This is a further factor of societal resilience, and can ensure more suitable and sustainable outcomes for EU-supported work.

The specific contribution of women to strengthening resilience to violent conflict within societies also needs to be fully recognised, as well as their role when engaging communities in the prevention and resolution of conflict and countering violent extremism.

Resilience and the prevention of violent conflict

A resilience approach to the prevention of violent conflict aims at improving interventions, through better understanding of the factors that lead to violent conflict and identifying the endogenous capacities within a society that can allow some communities to resist a drift towards violence. It can give traction to initiatives for peace, and support to local conflict-resolution mechanisms, particularly in countries where the state may have an ambiguous role as both a source of political authority and as a source of violence or coercion.

Such an approach also means broadening the range of responses considered, for instance by giving greater weight to contribution of employment and social policy to societal resilience in national recovery programmes, working to ensure social inclusion in governance arrangements for access to natural resources, and strengthening the gender dimension (see box above).

There is also scope to enhance the contribution of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) partnerships to strengthening resilience, in line with the May 2017 Council Conclusions on Security and Defence. This could include training and capacity building, and work under the Capacity Building in support of Security and Development initiative.

All of this needs to be underpinned by joined-up political and diplomatic work by the EU and its Member States.

The EU should:

- *strengthen its work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding through introducing a resilience dimension that puts a stronger emphasis on a more complete, shared analysis, engagement at community and state level, and, where appropriate, the*

rolling out of the integrated approach to conflict and crisis set out in the EU global strategy;

- *give greater weight in its conflict assessment methodology to local capacities to deal with risks, and the positive factors of resilience within a community, alongside an analysis of the power relationships and external pressures that can lead to societal breakdown; also take greater account of the link between environmental fragility and the risk of violent conflict, and systematically include climate and environmental indicators in conflict early warning systems;*

- *use this strengthened analysis to inform and enhance political efforts by the EU and its Member States to prevent conflict, through political dialogue, a collective diplomatic response, and engagement with partners such as the UN.*

Resilience, climate change and environmental degradation

Climate change, natural disasters and environmental degradation are interlinked and have a far-reaching impact on the resilience of communities and the ecological support systems upon which life depends. They are cause or contributing factors to many conflicts worldwide.

The EU should:

- *broaden its approach to these challenges and put greater emphasis on the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems, and maintenance of the services that they provide. This should be done alongside current work on building resilience in relation to extreme events such as drought, famine and floods[5];*

- *when assessing vulnerability, look not only at the intensity of events, but also at their frequency and likelihood; factor long-term environmental pressures into the assessment and response, such as deforestation and increasing water demand, as well as the need to anticipate the consequences of natural disasters and slow-onset events, such as land degradation, ocean acidification, sea level rise, and melting of glaciers;*

- *require more systematically environmental, climate and disaster risk assessments, integrate them into early warning systems to identify the potential impact of catastrophic sudden and slow onset risks, as well as to identify and prioritise preventive and/or adaptive measures for risk informed investments, development, territorial and urban planning.*

---

[5] The crucial role of well-functioning ecosystems, and the services they provide, is recognised in the EU's Nature Action Plan.

The EU is also committed to work with local authorities to boost resilience in rapidly-growing urban areas, where lack of planning or investment in measures to mitigate climate and geophysical risks can expose populations to significant human and economic damage when shocks and stresses occur. Addressing underlying risk factors through risk-informed public and private investments is proving more cost-effective than relying on post-disaster response. In this context, the EU will also continue to build on established sectoral dialogue on sustainable urbanisation with major partners and institutions, including regional and local authorities, to strengthen their resilience and innovation capacity, in line with the objectives of the New Urban Agenda.

The EU should:

- *promote the use of ecosystem-based approaches to disaster risk-reduction;*

- *promote risk transfer through risk financing mechanisms such as insurance and contingency credit;*

- *work with local authorities to develop governance systems that promote resilience to climate change, and the sustainable management of natural resources.*

This work will be accompanied by reinforced EU political outreach, notably through the Green Diplomacy Network, the G7 working groups on Climate and Fragility, the G7 InsuResilience partnership, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The EU should also work through other relevant fora, including the UN and relevant multilateral environmental agreements to raise awareness among partners of the environmental contribution to stability and security.

Resilience, migration and forced displacement

The 2030 Agenda recognises the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development. It also takes into account the vulnerabilities and needs of forcibly displaced people. Properly designed migration policies can strengthen economic resilience, both in the host countries and in the communities of origin. Moreover, at an individual level, migration and flight can be a legitimate adaptation strategy to severe external stresses. But sudden, sustained or large scale migratory pressures, including pressures from forced displacement, often fall most heavily on some of the poorest parts of the world, putting further stress on fragile coping mechanisms. Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly affected by this. And Europe can also expect to remain a destination for many, which in addition for the impact this will have on the EU, has implications for the transit countries on its geographical periphery.

A resilience approach to migration means designing policy to reflect how migratory patterns respond to the complex interaction between demography, institutional and democratic weaknesses, economic and social imbalances, violent conflict, environmental degradation and climate change. It means continuing to invest in a sound evidence base for policy, and making timely investments in response.

The EU should work to further develop the following key dimensions of a resilience approach to migration and forced displacement by:

- *ensuring that work on migration is fully embedded in our overall political relationship with partner countries. And that it is based on the principles of ownership, shared responsibility and the full respect of humanitarian and refugee law, and human rights obligations, including the right to protection;*

- *addressing root causes of irregular migration, some of which are deep-seated, including poverty, inequality, demographic growth, lack of employment, education and economic opportunities, instability, conflict, climate change and environmental degradation, and the long-term consequences of forced displacement;*

- *fostering self-reliance and enabling the displaced to live in dignity, including as contributors to their host societies[6]. This requires a new people-centred development-oriented approach for the forcibly displaced and their host communities that supports access to education, housing, decent work, livelihoods and services, and aims to end dependence on humanitarian assistance;*

- *countering trafficking and organised crime networks that exploit migrants and refugees, and apply a gender-sensitive lens to the specific forms of violence affecting them;*

- *supporting host communities. The EU should further support targeted initiatives to improve language and professional skills, access to services and to the labour market, inclusive education, foster inter-cultural exchanges and promote awareness campaigns targeting both host communities and migrants;*

- *strengthen the evidence base for interventions, including through devoting specific attention to forced displacement, drivers of migration and cooperation with non-EU countries in the EU framework programme for research and innovation.*

Resilience in practice – understanding the drivers and the interlinkages between pressures. An example of migration, environment and climate change

---

[6] Commission Communication on Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance – Forced Displacement and Development (COM(2016) 234 final)

Migration to the EU is thought to be heavily influenced by environmental and climate changes, though this driver is difficult to disentangle from economic, demographic and other drivers and often goes unreported. Many migrants from Western Africa or Eastern Africa have first been driven away from their homes as a result of desertification and soil degradation, contributing to a pattern of rural exodus in Africa, largely driven by environmental disruptions on agricultural systems.

The effects of natural disasters are compounded by economic and demographic trends and rapid urbanisation. As a result, African cities are often overwhelmed by a large expansion of population, and unable to meet the needs of their inhabitants for jobs, housing or basic services. Recent studies have shown how migrants largely congregate in informal settlements in the outskirts of large African cities, as for instance in the case of Accra, where more than 90% of migrant households live in one severely deprived area with no access to running water.

3.2 Strengthening resilience through policy dialogue and bilateral initiatives

The EU is increasingly using a resilience approach to break down silos when addressing complex domestic policy challenges ranging from economic policy to climate adaptation and security of energy supply. It has also made a significant investment in research to ensure a sound evidence base for this approach, and has developed a range of analytical tools to support policy implementation. For many of these challenges the domestic and international dimensions of the response are closely interlinked (see box below). This allows us to enrich policy dialogue with partner countries by bringing to the table insights from the EU's domestic policy experience. Policy dialogue is a two-way process, and the EU also has much to learn from its partners in this way.

The EU should:

- *draw upon the EU's technical experience of building resilience in its domestic policies to strengthen bilateral sectoral policy dialogue and initiatives; it should seek to expand the contribution of specialised EU agencies to this work;*

- *seek to ensure that EU best practice and standards are reflected in relevant multilateral instruments and policy frameworks, including in the ILO, WHO and G20;*

- *foster a shared international knowledge-base on resilience by involving non-EU countries in resilience-related research and innovation under Horizon 2020, and to share and operationalise the results in our international cooperation.*

Resilience in practice – linking the EU's internal and external policy work

12

Critical infrastructure protection - The concept of resilience has been embedded in the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection since 2013. This has resulted in the development of risk assessment methodologies and research that already informs cooperation with a number of non-EU countries, including Ukraine. The concept has been further developed in the proposed Regulation on Security of Gas Supply, which includes provisions relating to risks stemming from non-EU countries and including effective cross-border measures in national emergency and preventive action plans. A similar approach is taken in the electricity sector.

Energy security - EU policy on security of energy supply links the concept of a resilient Energy Union to global energy security and to the EU's climate change policy[7], including enhancing the energy security of partner countries by accelerating the global energy transition towards carbon-neutral economies and societies and increasing energy efficiency. EU energy and climate diplomacy aims at promoting this approach.

Climate adaptation - The 2013 Climate Adaptation Strategy has promoted resilience through comprehensive adaptation strategies at national and municipal level, addressing vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and critical infrastructure. The Strategy is currently being evaluated, and the experience gained within the EU shared with its external partners.

Civil protection – the EU civil protection mechanism contributes to resilience by improving the effectiveness of prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disaster in the EU, neighbouring countries and beyond. It promotes the development of risk assessments and the financing of prevention and preparedness, training and exercises.

Economic resilience - the EU is contributing to ongoing work in the G20 focused on building the capacity to achieve sustainable growth in the face of risks and pressures related to structural challenges; avoiding excessive build-up of risks, imbalances and vulnerabilities in the face of shocks. Although this does not establish binding obligations, the work has resulted in a useful conceptual framework to inform policy. Moreover, in line with the EU global strategy, the EU is developing a more integrated European Economic Diplomacy, aiming to foster growth and jobs both in non-EU countries and within the EU, by encouraging increased involvement and participation of the EU private sector in our partner countries.

Employment - The EU is supporting the development of a Recommendation on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience within the International Labour Conference. This will provide guidance to governments on targeted employment and social policies linking humanitarian assistance and longer term development.

Global health risks - The EU has recognised that major human and animal health threats such as Ebola, avian influenza, anti-microbial resistance and African swine fever pose a threat not only to the resilience of health systems, but also to societal and economic resilience. Drug-resistant infections could by 2050 cause global economic damage on a par with the 2008 financial crisis[8]. The EU's response has been to develop domestic capacities to anticipate and respond to severe and sustained outbreaks, while strengthening international cooperation,

---

[7] "A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy", COM (2015)80 of 25.2.2015
[8] World Bank figures

including with the WHO. It has invested in research and innovation projects to improve early detection and surveillance, and develop adequate medical countermeasures. Lack of access to water and sanitation, and air pollution, are also recognised as important health threats that the EU is actively addressing.

Research - The EU is already working under Horizon 2020 to develop a sound evidence base to inform our action to strengthen resilience. It funds work on resilience in relation to security, radical ideologies, the economy, social sciences, water and food security and the challenges of large-scale migration and forced displacement. Much of this is done in collaboration with partner countries[9]. Specialised services such as the European Commission's Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography, further the evidence-base, while research-informed risk indexes such as the Global Conflict Risk Index and the Index for Risk Management support decisions about prevention, preparedness and response.

Resilience in practice -
Fostering a strategic approach to resilience in the EU's neighbouring countries

The EU global strategy places a particular focus on resilience in the EU's neighbouring countries. This reflects the special political commitments of the accession process and the EU's neighbourhood policy; the close integration of our economies and societies; the interdependencies in our broad security interests; and the exposure that some of our neighbouring countries have to geopolitical rivalries.

A credible accession process grounded in strict and fair conditionality provides the political foundation to enhance resilience at state and societal level of countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey. At the core of this process is the "fundamentals first" approach, focusing on rule of law, human and fundamental rights, democratic institutions, including public administration reform, as well as economic reforms and competitiveness.

The 2015 Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was closely co-ordinated with work on the EU global strategy, and its four priorities[10] already reflect much of the Strategy's thinking on resilience. Taking forward the Review will, therefore, be a major part of our work on strengthening resilience in the region[11].

The ENP works towards long-term social, economic and political transformation which requires the building up of institutional capacities, working at different levels of civil society and with local and regional authorities as well as central government, tackling the entrenched

---

[9] Examples include the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area 2018-2028 (PRIMA), which aims at developing novel solutions for sustainable water management and food production, and the EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership in the area of food, nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

[10] Good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights; economic development; the security dimension; migration and mobility

[11] See Joint Report on the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Review, JOIN (2017) 18 final of 18.5.2017

interests of authoritarian elites and sectarian narratives and implementing security sector reform.

Our collaboration on security policy is based on developing a shared understanding of interests and risks. This is particularly the case in our work on the prevention of violent conflict, radicalisation and extremism, and in our work to strengthen cyber-security and resilience against hybrid threats.

An important dimension of our resilience approach is to strengthen linkages between our interventions in the region and those beyond. For example our work on energy, transport and connectivity links Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood countries, Iran and Central Asia; the EU Trust Fund for Africa tackles the root causes of irregular migration across the continent; the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis supports Syrian refugees and host communities in the Neighbourhood and Turkey.

A number of key tools underpin our strategic approach to strengthening resilience in the region: engaging partners at both state and community level; increased collaboration with Member States, partner countries and national and international stakeholders to enhance ownership; greater flexibility of funding; more tailor-made and differentiated relationships with partners; and improved public diplomacy and communication. At the core of this is a political approach based around new, mutually agreed Partnership Priorities or revised Association Agendas, based on a clear assessment of shared, medium-term priorities, underpinned by a commitment to respect human and fundamental rights.

3.3   Resilience and the security of the EU

Under the EU global strategy, peace and security are indivisible from sustainable and inclusive development, the respect of global norms and rules-based international systems. Promoting this agenda remains central to the EU's external action. But the Global Strategy also recognises that the EU and its Member States are subject to many of the structural pressures that test the resilience and expose vulnerabilities of our partner countries. That is why it identifies the protection of the EU as a key task ahead. Building more resilient neighbours is part of the response. But EU external policy, including through the CSDP, has also a role in directly contributing to resilience within our borders, at a time when the Union has a greater responsibility than ever before to contribute to the security of its citizens. That requires better detection of external pressures and threats, coupled with adequate mechanisms to ensure an appropriate political response.

The EU's work on the Security Union also puts resilience at the heart of its approach, while addressing the issue of external non-state actors. Under the April 2015 European Agenda on Security, the Commission has focused on two broad pillars: tackling terrorism and organised crime, and strengthening the Union's defences and building resilience.

The challenge now is to knit together the internal and external security dimensions of EU policy in a way that mutually reinforces them, effectively raises the cost of coercive action by

external parties, and allows the Union to anticipate and take early political and operational action in response to other kinds of pressures.

The EU will continue to pursue six main strands of concrete work in this regard:

- **Resilience against hybrid threats**. Building on the Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats, a central objective of EU efforts will be to strengthen protection of critical infrastructure, while diversifying energy sources and suppliers, and strengthening defence capabilities. Priority will be given to ensuring effective operational cooperation and secure communication between the Member States, and to work with actors across sectors, making use of common tools. Cooperation with non-EU countries, particularly in the EU's neighbourhood, will be stepped up.

- **Cyber-security**. The malicious use of Information and Communication Technologies can undermine both societal and economic resilience. Cyber threats have safety and security implications, and can cause major damage to the economy. In response both a normative agenda and an operational one will be pursued. Work will continue in line with UN efforts to build international consensus around the rejection of the malicious use of ICT in or against any kind of essential services, regardless of its source, motive, nature or geographic origin. At the same time the EU is working to promote the resilience of essential services both internally[12] and at the international level, and will enhance its cross-border cooperation on this agenda[13].

- **Strategic communication**. The EU and some of its partner countries are targeted by external disinformation activities that form part of concerted strategies to discredit the political and social systems that are central to our identity, to our security and stability. In response measures to increase citizens' resilience to hostile disinformation will be further developed by raising awareness, by supporting greater media plurality and professionalism, and by communicating positive narratives and fact-based messages.

  The EU should strengthen the resources of the East Stratcom Task Force and intensify its cooperation with EU institutions, Member States and likeminded partners. Longer term strategic approach and outreach towards Eastern Partnership countries will be further developed, focusing on people-to-people exchanges, and on working with existing civil society networks that already represent a source of community-based resilience. A similar approach will be pursued in the Western Balkans and Turkey, with a reinforced team to deal with strategic communication in candidate countries and potential candidates.

---

[12] For example, Directive (EU) 2016/1148 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 concerning measures for a high common level of security of network and information systems across the Union, COM(2016) 410 final and the review of the 2013 EU Cybersecurity Strategy planned for September 2017.

[13] Including work with the EU's main trade partners toward stronger cybersecurity for connected objects, as announced in the Digital Single Market mid-term review COM (2017) 228 final of 10.5.2017

The EU should also develop an outreach strategy to the Arab world that addresses terrorist propaganda and the use of the internet in radicalisation, and promotes human and fundamental rights.

- The work to strengthen state and societal resilience described above is central to the EU's approach to **counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism.** Prevention of radicalisation requires a carefully adapted strategy that responds to the various drivers of violence. Improved legal frameworks and effective institutions to detect, prevent and disrupt terrorist organisations and their sources of funding is essential. But to have the desired impact, such work will need to go hand in hand with ensuring the protection of the rights and civic space that helps create peaceful and stable societies less susceptible to the message of violent extremism. The EU will encourage partner countries in its Counter-Terrorism dialogue to address the issue across all relevant policies, not just as a security response. This includes ensuring that local practitioners can identify and address the early warning signs of radicalisation, including online radicalisation.

- **Enhancing the security of critical transport infrastructure**. Increased security of critical transport is an important element of co-operative, connected and automated mobility that underpins a global, inter-connected economy. The EU should strengthen its engagement with non-EU countries to mitigate threats to transport infrastructure and services. It should reinforce the access to co-operation at expert level, in support of capacity building, awareness strategies, tools and information networks, as well as improving the role of police and judiciary systems.

- **Further developing cooperation with NATO and the OSCE.** The EU and NATO have agreed a number of measures to bolster resilience as part of their work on countering hybrid threats. These include intensification of staff contacts on resilience requirements, promoting greater coherence between the EU Capability Development Plan and the NATO Defence Planning Process, and working to be ready to deploy experts upon request to support EU Member States or NATO allies in enhancing their resilience, either in the pre-crisis phase or in response to a crisis.

   This work has underlined the interdependencies between civil authorities, military and private sector in strengthening the resilience of Member States to hostile acts by state and non-state actors. These interdependencies range from the reliance of the military on civilian logistical and telecommunication capabilities, to the reliance of civil authorities on military capabilities for handling disruptive events affecting large numbers of citizens. These interdependencies will be explored with a view to coming forward with proposals to the Council for further possible future co-ordinated work-streams with NATO.

   There is considerable scope to explore collaborative work on resilience with the **OSCE**, in view of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security encompassing the military, the economic and environmental as well as the human dimensions.

4. The way forward – four building blocks to incorporating a strategic approach to resilience in the EU's external action

The EU global strategy's emphasis on resilience underlines a significant change in the way the EU manages the risk and impact of disruptive shocks and pressures in its external policy. It recognises that these pressures and shocks are part of the context in which the EU operates and should be factored into the way we work, rather than being seen as an unexpected exception. This implies a progressive shift in emphasis from crisis containment to upstream measures founded in long-term, but flexible, country and regional strategies that are better risk-informed and less instrument-driven. It also implies a greater attention to risk factors affecting EU interests. Ultimately the aim will be to combine political dialogue, sectoral policy dialogue, technical and financial assistance in an effective way upstream of a crisis.

All this requires a rethink of the EU's problem analysis and design of programmes, as well as of the methods of assessment of the sustainability of EU's interventions. In response, four basic building-blocks to incorporating a resilience approach in a systematic way into the EU's external action are proposed:

− improving and sharing analysis of risk at country and regional level so as better to inform strategy, political dialogue and programming of assistance;

− instituting a more dynamic monitoring of external pressures, and working with the Council to ensure a more timely political and diplomatic response;

− integrating the resilience approach in EU programming and financing of external action;

− developing international policy and practice on resilience.

4.1 Improving analysis of risk at country and regional level

The EU has access to a formidable body of information about risks, pressures and vulnerabilities to shock in its partner countries. This knowledge comes from the EU's diplomatic and intelligence networks, its operational field presence, the sectoral policy expertise available in the institutions and Member States, and the monitoring mechanisms of the EU agencies. There is a multiplicity of overlapping risk assessment processes reflecting different policy perspectives: humanitarian, conflict, environmental and economic. There are, nontheless, significant gaps, for instance in our ability to predict the impact of climate change, environmental and other factors on migratory movements. In addition, analysis often gives too little emphasis to local resilience capacities and the positive dynamics these can generate. And risk assessment processes are not always able to capture in full the possible impact on EU political, security and economic interests.

While respecting the different mandates, there is a need to bring the various sources of information together in a way that gives decision-makers a full picture of how different factors may interact to affect the development and stability of a country or region, or programme objectives.

The EU should:

- *improve conflict sensitivity, and address gaps in our understanding of risk, for instance by developing better mechanisms to assess the nature and impact of future flows of displaced people and migrants, and the relationship between climate pressures, environmental degradation and violent conflict;*

- *streamline current assessment processes to ensure that a single succinct country assessment identifying both risk and resilience factors is available to guide policy across the various actors of EU external policy. This single country assessment will integrate in a more systematic and dynamic way information from the EU's diplomatic network, humanitarian, crisis response and development actors as well as the specialised knowledge about the external environment held by the EU's internal policy Directorates General and agencies. It would inform political dialogue and the design of assistance programmes. It would provide an analytical contribution in support of the established decision-making processes governing the development of EU country strategies, CSDP operations and the programming of external assistance;*

- *promote joint analysis with multilateral partner organisations and bilaterally with like-minded development partners addressing the different dimensions of resilience.*

4.2 A more dynamic monitoring of external pressures to allow early action

The EU needs to be able to monitor and respond to external pressures affecting the resilience of its partner countries and of the EU in both a medium-term and a short-term time frame.

The EU should:

- *further develop the EU's Conflict Early Warning System in order to integrate appropriate indicators of resilience alongside the risk factors currently monitored The Early Warning System already picks up on many broader indicators of risk and vulnerability, such as environmental, climate and demographic pressures[14], as well as indicators of governance and institutional capacity to cope with such pressures. Monitoring of resilience indicators could help identify the tipping point at which pressures overwhelm coping mechanisms;*

- *reflect the strategic importance of resilience when developing the EU's Integrated Approach to external conflicts and crises. The Integrated Approach, as envisaged in the EU global strategy, expands the scope and ambition of the Comprehensive Approach, and should succeed it following completion of the 2016-2017 Comprehensive Approach Action Plan.*

---

[14] In identifying these indicators the EU will draw upon scientific research conducted by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, and that funded under Horizon 2020.

The Conflict Early Warning System is designed primarily to identify potential drivers of violent conflict in third countries, within a four year horizon. It is now proposed to complement this with mechanisms focused on identifying external pressures and their consequences in a short-term horizon, with a view to informing a strengthened and timely EU political response.

The EU should:

- *establish a light-touch short-term horizon-scanning system mechanism to identify the impact on EU interests of external pressures identified in a three to six month time frame. This will focus on identifying external pressures that could present a risk of derailing in a significant way a partner country's development process or security, or that could have significant consequences for the resilience of the Union. To the extent that data is available it would also provide an initial measure of the consequences for the broader interests of the Union, such as external disruptions to the security of energy supply and critical supply chains, public health emergencies, the impact of crises on EU citizens abroad, and major migratory movements;[15]*

- *support efforts, including at the UN, for the early detection and prevention of atrocities, including through the development of an atrocity-prevention tool kit.*

Both systems will be designed to support effective decision-making processes upstream of a crisis. The Council and the Commission both have central roles to play in this.

In view of this:

- *the Political and Security Committee (PSC) will be invited to consider the results of the horizon-scanning mechanism on a regular basis in order to ensure timely political guidance for early action;*

- *the Presidency will be invited to consider the relevance of the information from the horizon-scanning mechanisms to other relevant Council formations, such as the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI);*

---

[15] This could include data from the Justice and Home Affairs agencies such as the European Border Guard and Cost Guard Agency on migratory pressures, and the advance cargo information and customs risk management system that identifies certain threats to the security and integrity of international supply chains, and to critical infrastructure such as sea-port facilities, airports or land borders.

- *the EU should continue to develop mechanisms that integrate flexibility into assistance programmes, to allow early appropriate action when risks are identified.*

4.3 Integrating the resilience approach into EU programming and financing

The EU will build on existing practice to make an assessment of risk and resilience factors a standard component of programming processes and project design across EU humanitarian, crisis response and development assistance, including the EU Trust Funds. Key lessons from the resilience approach include the need to be able to work at multiple levels, including community-driven interventions, the need for longer term programming cycles (including planning of humanitarian aid) combined with short term flexibility, and the need for contingency financing arrangements to address potential disruptive pressures and shocks that could otherwise derail the achievement of longer term strategic objectives. This should be taken into account in joint programming processes with Member States, which will be further encouraged.

The EU should:

- *update programming guidance where necessary, drawing on EU experience and the methodological work of other multilateral partners on resilience. It should underline that humanitarian and development assistance in fragile environments should be conflict-sensitive to avoid the potential of negative impact and to improve effectiveness. Methodologies to identify and address such risks will be further developed;*

- *take account in programme monitoring and evaluation frameworks the fact that strengthening resilience requires long-term interventions with a high degree of innovation and flexibility in their design, identifying appropriate indicators and acknowledging the challenge to collect qualitative data;*

- *take into consideration the strategic approach to resilience in its current and future financing of EU external action;*

- *cost-effective innovative risk financing solutions at a regional, national and local level should be explored (e.g. contingent credit, catastrophe funds and insurance).*

4.4 Developing international policy and practice

The EU is working closely with major international partners that have developed their own resilience policy frameworks, including the United Nations, World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, European Bank for Reconstruction and

Development. The EU has an interest in developing a shared understanding and practice around resilience, and in cooperating at operational level where possible.

The EU should:

- *intensify policy and practical cooperation with international partners in order to share research findings and methodological knowledge and, where possible align resilience approaches, share data sets and alert systems;*

- *cooperate more closely with regional and sub-regional organisations on resilience frameworks, by sharing and exchanging evidence and experience.*

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission invite the European Parliament and the Council to endorse and support the approach set out in this Joint Communication.

Annex – 10 guiding considerations for a strategic approach to resilience

Based on the EU's experience following the 2012 Communication, and the insights gained from the wide consultation process in the preparation of this Communication, the following guiding considerations for an effective and strategic approach to resilience can be identified:

1. **Strengthening resilience is a means not an end.** The EU's strategic approach to resilience is about building upon underlying institutional and societal strengths in partner countries in order to achieve long term sustainable development or security goals. It is about securing progress towards these goals by addressing vulnerabilities and underlying structural risks. It recognises that development, and progress towards democracy, peace and security, is not a linear process, and that sectoral approaches, on their own, are not always enough to ensure sustainable results.

2. **Understanding the factors of resilience in a given context can help us plan against pressures and contingencies in a more effective manner.** To do so requires a proper understanding of the linkages between different parts of the complex systems that govern and sustain states, societies and communities, as well as of how they respond when faced with sudden-onset shocks, recurrent or long-term stresses.

3. **Resilience is context-specific, and requires tailor-made approaches.** Although there are a number of common characteristics of resilient systems, it will be for practitioners and local actors to develop context-specific working definitions. The role of the EU and other external actors is to support this process and to foster societies better empowered to identify and solve their own problems. It requires policy makers and development partners to adopt a long-term approach that tolerates the necessary adaptability as approaches are tested and refined.

4. **Identifying and building upon existing positive sources of resilience is as important as tracking and responding to vulnerabilities**. Such factors may take the form of institutionalised or informal democratic and good governance or justice systems, non-state institutions and organisations, embedded cultural norms and practices or ad hoc community-driven solutions that complement state capacities or compensate for their absence. **Resilience has to be addressed at multiple levels – state, society and community.** Local governments and civil society are often the basis on which resilience can take root and grow at community level. Women have a specific and essential role that needs to be recognised and acted upon, while addressing the structural causes of gender inequality.

5. **Resilience is about transformation not preserving the status quo.** If resilience is about sustaining the core identity and capabilities of states, societies and communities in the face of disruptive pressures, it is also about ensuring their ability to adapt and reform to meet new needs. Harnessing the transformative dimension of resilience is key.

6. **Resilience requires a political approach.** Governments have primary responsibility for catering for the needs of their populations, and international assistance should not be a substitute for local responsibility and political action. All countries have committed to the Sustainable Development Goals, which include specific references to strengthening resilience. Thus the primary responsibility for integrating resilience into

national and local policy frameworks lies within each country. However, the EU and its Member States can support the strengthening of resilience through raising the issue as an integral part of its political dialogue, including at the highest level.

7. **Resilience requires risk-informed programming**. Action to address the underlying diverse causes of fragility should be accompanied with risk management measures to protect populations from shocks and stresses, limit their impact through early response and assist a quick recovery.

8. It will not always be possible to address sustained pressures at their point of origin, or to escape the consequences of a sudden-onset crisis. But addressing problems at the point of failure is disproportionately costly. That means **building flexibility and adaptability to change into programme design from the outset**. It also means thinking about the possible stresses that strengthening or weakening one part of a system can place on another.

9. **Early warning needs to be linked to early action.** It is not possible to avoid all risks, so an effective resilience approach requires decision makers to be able to identify and assess pressures in the long, medium and short term, and to take effective early action. This means that a complete assessment has to be linked to appropriate decision-making processes. This is not just about shocks (as in the case of natural disaster, inter-state conflict or economic crisis), it is also about slow-onset crises, recurrent pressures, or cumulative long-term pressures that can reach a tipping point (demographic, environmental degradation, climate change, migratory and other chronic stresses).

10. **The operational starting point is a broader analysis of strengths, vulnerabilities and pressures.** States and societies are built around complex interdependencies between political and security actors, the private sector, civil society, communities and individuals. Traditional sectoral policy approaches may not identify all vulnerabilities, their interconnections, or anticipate how a system as a whole will respond when it comes under pressure, including possible consequences for other States. That means that for any given outcome, risk – and the ability to cope – needs to be analysed at multiple levels, particularly at the points at which one factor of resilience, or one set of actors is dependent on the resilience of others, or where power relations between different levels of society play an important role. Typically this will mean an "all-hazard" approach, bringing together analysis at regional, state, organisational, community and individual level.