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Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on CSDP, as adopted by the Council on 18 May 2015.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON CSDP**Foreign Affairs Council, 18 May 2015**

1. The global and European security environment has changed dramatically in recent years. This calls for a stronger Europe, with a stronger and more effective Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The conflicts, threats and instability in the EU's immediate and wider neighbourhood, affecting inter alia Iraq, Libya, the Sahel, Syria and Ukraine, as outlined in the report from the High Representative, together with long standing and newly emerging security challenges, are significantly impacting European security as well as international peace and security, and challenging our fundamental values and principles.
2. By addressing these conflicts, sources of instability and other security challenges, the EU and its Member States are assuming increased responsibilities to act as a security provider, at the international level and in particular in the neighbourhood, thereby also enhancing their own security and their global strategic role by responding to these challenges together. The EU and its Member States, through the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and other policies and instruments, have a strong role to play through the unique EU Comprehensive Approach to preventing and managing conflicts and addressing their causes.
3. The Council highlights the importance and timeliness of the ongoing strategic review, led by the High Representative, to assess the changes in the global environment and the challenges and opportunities arising for the Union. It welcomes the continuing close consultations with Member States, which are essential to the High Representative in fulfilling her mandate, aimed at providing a foundation to enable the European Council in June to decide on the way forward. It looks forward to continue this inclusive process. A broad European strategy on foreign and security policy issues could identify and describe EU interests, priorities and objectives, existing and evolving threats, challenges and opportunities, and the EU instruments and means to meet them. CSDP's increasingly important role in the EU's external action would be highlighted.

4. The Council strongly underlines the need to further strengthen the links between external and internal security. The aim is to increase synergies in the EU response to priority horizontal issues such as terrorism, organised crime, foreign fighters, smuggling and trafficking in human beings, irregular migration, hybrid threats, border management, energy security and cyber security, taking into account i.a. the ongoing revision of the European Agenda for Security. In this context, the Council encourages the development of further synergies between CSDP, in both its civilian and military dimensions, and Freedom, Security and Justice actors, notably the EU agencies (Europol, FRONTEX and CEPOL) and with Interpol, by inter alia building on the frameworks of co-operation signed between the EEAS, FRONTEX and Europol as well as between the EEAS and the European Gendarmerie Force.
5. In light of the increasing use of hybrid strategies and operations by state and non-state actors, notably in the immediate and wider EU neighbourhood, the Council invites the High Representative, in close co-operation with Commission services and the European Defence Agency, and in consultation with the EU Member States, to present by the end of 2015 a joint framework with actionable proposals to help countering hybrid threats and foster the resilience of the EU and its Member States as well as partners. It should take into account relevant work regarding cyber defence, early warning, strategic communications, relevant internal and external EU policies and assess the implications for capability development. It underlines as well the need for complementarity and transparent co-operation and coordination in this area with relevant partner organisations, including in particular NATO, as well as partner countries, as appropriate.
6. The Council recalls the importance of more efficient crisis management structures within the EEAS, including the need for more civilian expertise. The planning and conduct of CSDP missions and operations are still an area where progress is needed. In this respect, the Council looks forward to the results of the EEAS review and the associated review of EEAS crisis management structures. This work should enable a further embedding of the EU's Comprehensive Approach to crisis management.

7. In order to respond to the changing security environment and strategic context, the Council is more than ever committed to further strengthening CSDP and enhancing the EU's ability to act as a security provider, in line with the Conclusions from the European Council of December 2013 and its own conclusions of November 2013 and November 2014. It welcomes the progress made, as reported by the High Representative, the European Defence Agency and the Commission, and calls for continuous efforts to implement them. The Council underlines the importance of effective communication to raise public awareness and foster a better understanding of security and defence matters.
8. In line with the European Council Conclusions of December 2013 on security and defence, the Council reiterates the need to enhance the effectiveness of CSDP and the development and maintenance of Member States' capabilities, supported by a more integrated, sustainable, innovative and competitive European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), which also contributes to jobs, growth and innovation across the EU and can enhance Europe's strategic autonomy, strengthening its ability to act with partners. This requires systematic co-operation and coordination within the EU and among its Member States, underpinned by the necessary means and budgetary resources, and coherent and effective use of EU instruments and policies for the benefit of security and defence.

While respecting the primacy of Member States competence in defence, the EU can act as an enabler for security and defence co-operation, in line with the Treaties. Therefore, defence issues should also be considered in coherence with other relevant EU policies and sectors, and vice versa, thereby fully exploiting the EU's added value.

9. Ahead of the European Council, the Council, in order to address increasing security challenges, stresses the importance of allocating a sufficient level of expenditures for defence and the need to make the most effective use of these resources in order to further boost capability development, defence Research & Technology, and co-operation. The Council recalls the voluntary and collective defence spending benchmarks endorsed by the EDA Ministerial Steering Board in 2007¹, which are qualitative and co-operation-driven.

¹ 20% of total defence expenditure for equipment procurement, 35% of which for European collaborative equipment procurement; 2% of total defence expenditure in R&T, 20% of which for European collaborative defence R&T.

10. Furthermore, in light of the significant engagement in civilian CSDP missions and the broad range of tasks that they are increasingly called upon to fulfil, the Council reiterates the need to fully implement the Civilian Capability Development Plan and enhance the development, availability and generation of civilian capabilities. This includes revisiting the priority areas which were endorsed by the **European Council** in Feira, when the civilian CSDP was launched 15 years ago and should reflect the follow-up of the ongoing strategic review. It also calls on Member States and EEAS to work jointly to help address in particular the recruitment and the deployment of personnel.
11. The Council furthermore underlines that a political decision to use the fast track procedure for the planning process of military CSDP missions/operations, in light of the urgency of the situation, requires early force sensing and should trigger faster provision by Member States of personnel and swifter generation of the necessary forces to enable mission launch.

Enhancing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP

12. The Council highlights the significant contribution of the CSDP missions and operations to international peace and stability. The EU presently deploys eleven civilian CSDP missions and five military CSDP operations across three continents². It expresses its appreciation for the work carried out by all the civilian and military personnel participating in them.

In the light of broader EU engagement, the Council welcomes the successful launch of the EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine) in 2014 and EUCAP SAHEL Mali in 2015. It welcomes as well the successful completion of the CSDP military bridging operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA) in March 2015, followed by the launch of the new CSDP military advisory mission in the country (EUMAM RCA). It notes the successful contribution of the European Gendarmerie Force within EUFOR RCA and EUCAP SAHEL Mali.

² EUAM Ukraine; EUBAM Libya; EUBAM Rafah; EUCAP Nestor; EUCAP SAHEL Mali; EUCAP SAHEL Niger; EUFOR Althea; EULEX Kosovo; EUMAM RCA; EUMM Georgia; EUNAVFOR Atalanta; EUPOL Afghanistan; EUPOL COPPS; EUSEC RD Congo; EUTM Somalia and EUTM Mali.

The Council reiterates its concern on the tragic loss of life of migrants in the Southern Central Mediterranean and the need to prevent it. In response to and in line with the extraordinary European Council of 23 April, today it approves the Crisis Management Concept for, and adopts the Council Decision establishing a CSDP operation to contribute to the disruption of human smuggling networks, in line with international law. It calls for further work on this basis to enable further decision-making by the Council. The Council also welcomes the ongoing work to strengthen EUCAP SAHEL Niger to assist the Nigerien authorities in this respect and underlines the need for comprehensiveness and close coordination with other CSDP missions in the region as well as other EU instruments. The Council recalls the need to implement the integrated border management projects in the Sahel region in accordance with the Sahel Action Plan.

13. The Council emphasises the importance of working with its partners, in particular the UN, NATO, OSCE, African Union, League of Arab States and ASEAN, as well as strategic partners and other partner countries, within our neighbourhood and more globally, with due respect to the institutional framework and decision-making autonomy of the EU, and the principle of inclusiveness.

In this context, and especially in light of the current strategic context, the Council welcomes that the EU has further developed co-operation with its international partners, and highlights in particular:

- the unique and long standing co-operation with the United Nations in crisis management, and the need to further strengthen our institutional relations and strategic partnership, and therefore welcomes the recently jointly identified priority areas for strengthening the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peacekeeping and Crisis Management from 2015 to 2018. It underlines the importance of EU Member States' contributions to UN peacekeeping operations;
- the continued close and mutually reinforcing co-operation with NATO in areas of shared interest, both strategically and operationally, in crisis management as well as on military capability development where requirements overlap, and continue to seek further synergies and complementarity. It welcomes the High Representative's efforts to strengthen strategic and practical co-operation between the EU and NATO, including in

view of European Councils dealing with defence matters and NATO summits, with the overall objective of building a true organisation-to-organisation relationship, with due respect for the decision-making autonomy of each organisation. Without prejudice to EU Treaty provisions, the Council also encourages NATO co-operation with the non-NATO EU Member States;

- the co-operation with the African Union and African partners in follow up to the Declaration of the **EU-Africa Summit** of 2014;
- the continued partnership with OSCE and encourages the further development of co-operation in conflict prevention, crisis management, post-conflict rehabilitation and cooperative security in the OSCE area; it welcomes in particular EU's enabling support to the OSCE special monitoring mission in Ukraine;
- the development of CSDP dialogue and co-operation with a growing number of partner countries and welcomes in particular the recently signed Framework Participation Agreements which are forging new partnerships in Asia and South America, as well as partners' increasing participation in CSDP missions and operations; the Council encourages the EEAS to continue to associate contributing partners as closely as possible to the preparation and conduct of these missions and operations, without prejudice to the decision-making autonomy of the EU and in line with agreed frameworks;
- the importance of continuing co-operation with partners to promote security in the EU's neighbourhood, through dialogue, co-operation and support to security sector reforms in willing neighbourhood countries, including in the framework of the **Eastern Partnership Panel** on co-operation in the area of CSDP, noting also the important contribution by the multilateral Trust Fund to support EaP countries participation, and also through further engagement with Mediterranean partners.

14. The Council welcomes the ongoing implementation of the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and crises, as set out in Council conclusions of May 2014, including through the Action Plan for 2015, in view of further operationalising it together with the Member States, including through regional strategies, and looks forward to the presentation of an updated Action Plan for 2016 building on lessons learned and developed in close coordination with the Member States.

15. In line with the EU's Comprehensive Approach and in order to maximize the impact, efficiency and consistency of EU support, the Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to develop, in consultation with the Member States, an EU-wide strategic framework for Security Sector Reform by mid-2016. This policy concept should bring together CSDP and all other relevant CFSP tools as well as development co-operation instruments and Freedom, Security and Justice actors, while respecting their respective legal bases, primary objectives and decision making procedures.
16. The Council welcomes the recent presentation, ahead of the June European Council, of the Joint Communication on “Capacity building in support of security and development – Enabling partners to prevent and manage crises”, and welcomes its proposals for further work and follow-up. In line with previous conclusions calling for a systematic, coordinated and coherent policy approach for concrete implementation, the Council particularly welcomes the proposals for evaluation and monitoring and for a risk management methodology, as well as on enhancing regular and systematic interaction and better coordination among EU institutions and Member States regarding security capacity building.

The Council underlines the flexible geographical scope of the initiative, recalling the European Council Conclusions of March 2014 on EU-Africa relations, and its own conclusions of November 2014. The Council notes the considerations regarding sustainable arrangements on funding, and invites the EEAS and the Commission services to further work in view of the FAC in October/November on the full potential of all relevant Union instruments taking into account their legal bases, and to assess the feasibility of: an adaptation of the African Peace Facility to address its limitations; the establishment of a EU facility linking closer peace, security and development in the framework of one or more existing EU instruments; and a dedicated instrument to this effect, in view of the mid-term review of the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020, while improving the coherence with Member States' own instruments and addressing medium-term challenges.

Drawing on the identified pilot cases in Mali and Somalia as well as on the need to strengthen the African Peace and Security Architecture, it invites the EEAS and Commission services, in close coordination with EU delegations and in consultation with the Member States, to present by Summer 2015 an implementation plan with concrete measures and actors involved.

17. Underlining the need to enhance CSDP's effectiveness and responsiveness in today's increasingly unpredictable and rapidly changing security environment, the Council furthermore in particular:
 - a. Welcomes the progress in taking forward elements of a Shared Services Centre concept inter alia through the proposal of a Mission Support Platform, as part of a longer term process to realise greater efficiencies, flexibility and rationalise the provision of mission support functions to civilian CSDP missions and improve their early deployment and effective conduct. In this context, the Council welcomes the preparatory work done on the Mission Support Platform and looks forward to working with the relevant EEAS and Commission services to deliver improvements by the beginning of 2016;
 - b. Calls upon the EEAS to make systematic use of lessons learned, where agreed by Member States, which are particularly needed to enhance rapid deployment and to optimise CSDP missions' and operations' performance;
 - c. Welcomes the ongoing efforts to mainstream human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law, including protection of civilians as well as children in armed conflict, into planning, implementation and review of CSDP. The Council stresses the need for a more systematic and proactive approach to these issues at all levels.

The Council encourages as well further efforts to mainstream and strengthen the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security, its follow-up resolutions and a gender perspective in CSDP planning, implementation and review. It welcomes the intention by the HR/VP in the coming review of the EEAS to establish a high-level function dedicated for UNSCR 1325 and gender related matters.

In order to achieve this, the Council welcomes the idea of a baseline study that would allow measuring progress and delivery on human rights, gender and related fields over time. The Council calls on the HR/VP to remain engaged on this matter and present findings and recommendations of the baseline study by 2016.

- d. Further to its conclusions of November 2013, welcomes ongoing Member States-driven efforts to promote energy efficiency in EU Member States' armed forces and CSDP missions and operations and enhance their effectiveness, including through EDA activities, in the framework of a long-term perspective of Green Defence and as part of the contribution of the EU and its Member States to build awareness and capacities to tackle the strategic and security dimensions of climate change. In this context, it notes the upcoming conference of the parties to the UNFCCC.
- e. Welcomes the new military Rapid Response Concept, noting that it provides for a broader and more modular approach to the EU's rapid response capabilities. Furthermore, the Council reaffirms that the EU Battlegroups (EU BGs) remain the EU's primary military rapid reaction tool, notably for the initial entry phase of larger CSDP operations. The Council highlights that future EU BGs should be trained, designed and certified accordingly, in accordance with the full range of tasks under the EU Battlegroup Concept. In order to make best use of this valuable capability, the Council highlights, whilst keeping enough flexibility, that the EU BGs should routinely be taken into consideration during the planning process of CSDP operations/missions as an option of choice in crisis situations requiring prompt action. In this vein, it welcomes the recently agreed renewal of the Declaration on the EU BG strategic transport costs until December 2016. It encourages further work on these issues. Finally, it welcomes the commitments made to fill the EU BG roster, while noting the importance of further commitments by Member States, also in the land, naval and air forces databases.
- f. Notes that there is scope for further discussion on the issue of CSDP financing, including EU Battlegroups, while noting that the review of the Athena mechanism has been completed;

- g. Welcomes the ongoing work to implement the EU Cyber Defence Policy Framework, agreed in November 2014, and looks forward to the first progress report by June 2015, which should cover all its work strands. The Council underlines the need for enhanced awareness of cyber threats, and supports increasing situational awareness, including by organising exercises and trainings in the CSDP area.-This work should be underpinned by a reinforcement of Member States' and EU institutions' capabilities and increased information exchange between EU institutions and Member States. The Council furthermore recalls its position that international law, in particular the UN charter, is applicable to cyberspace and is essential to reduce risks and contribute to peace and security. It therefore welcomes the relevant outcomes of the 2015 global conference on cyberspace in The Hague;
- h. Welcomes as well the ongoing work to implement the Action Plan which was agreed in December 2014 to implement the cross sectorial EU Maritime Security Strategy, including current initiatives by EU institutions and agencies and Member States, also with a view of supporting relevant thematic and regional EU strategies;
- i. Welcomes the launch of the negotiation for EU Satellite Centre procurement of next generation governmental high resolution imagery, and encourages the Commission, the EEAS, the EDA and Member States to further cooperate in the field of Space Surveillance and Tracking and high resolution imagery, based on Member States' assets and Global Satellite Navigation System (GNSS);
- j. Welcomes the clarification and understanding achieved regarding the possible use of Article 44 TEU, which provides a potential additional modality for the EU and its Member States acting as a security provider together, making use of the flexibility of the Union framework. It encouraged testing the related CSDP modalities in an exercise activity.

Enhancing the development of capabilities

18. Recognising the continuous high demand for rapidly deployable, well trained civilian experts, including in specialised profiles, the Council underlines the need to further improve and expedite the development of civilian capabilities. To this end, the Council welcomes the finalisation of a List of Generic civilian CSDP tasks common to all missions, allowing for a more systematic approach to civilian capability development as a substantial contribution to the full implementation of the Civilian Capability Development Plan with a view to the June European Council. Furthermore, the Council recalls the positive contributions that National Strategies could offer in facilitating the deployment of civilian personnel. The Council also encourages the EEAS to further progress on improving recruitment procedures and increasing transparency.

To support these efforts in civilian capability development, the Council also looks forward to a sustainable solution to cover the training needs in civilian CSDP by the relevant training providers at national and European levels, to be addressed in the EU CSDP Training Policy. In this regard, the Council also stresses the need to finalize the work on the software platform called Goalkeeper, which serves as an information hub for Member States and EEAS supporting training, recruitment, development of national rosters as a matter of urgency, and underlines the importance of allocating necessary EEAS resources to sustain this project.

19. The Council welcomes the results achieved by the European Defence Agency (EDA), in particular its contribution to fulfilling the taskings from Council in November and the European Council in December 2013. It welcomes in particular the progress achieved by Member States with the support of EDA in Pooling & Sharing projects and programmes, notably in the four key projects endorsed by the European Council in December 2013: Air-to-Air Refuelling (AAR); Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS); Governmental Satellite Communications (GOVSATCOM) and Cyber Defence. The Council encourages further progress to be made:

- on AAR: other Member States to join the initiative and synergies with similar fleets in Europe to be identified; greater interoperability through the setting up of a AAR training cycle; and the use of the European Air Transport Command (EATC) as a centre of expertise;
- on RPAS: EDA and Commission to intensify their activities in the field of air traffic insertion, certification and regulation for a safe integration in Single European Sky; interaction with other partners to be facilitated in order to ensure the viability of the business case of the MALE RPAS programme; other Member States to join the initiative in due course;
- on GOVSATCOM: EDA and the European Commission to consider possible next steps on the basis of the finalised assessment of the respective military and civilian user needs;
- on Cyber Defence: a cooperative framework programme to be considered; efforts in the field of training and education to be intensified.

20. Cooperative programmes are important for enhancing capabilities in Europe, but also for clarifying priorities for industry. On the basis of new security risks and challenges, the Capability Development Plan, an assessment of cooperative opportunities derived from the Collaborative Database (CODABA) and EU wider policies, potential additional priority capability areas could be investigated within EDA's remit. With a view to taking the most promising capability priorities forward, EDA may establish appropriate roadmaps with interested Member States.

21. The Council encourages EDA to continue supporting cooperative capability projects including through the development of enablers and incentives in close coordination with Member States. It takes note of the work on non-market distorting fiscal measures in accordance with existing European law, incentives for and innovative approaches to co-operation, including pooled procurement, and on potential European Investment Bank support. It encourages EDA, in close co-operation with Member States, to develop concrete proposals and demonstrate their added value.

22. The Council encourages the EDA in its new role to facilitate the coordination of military views in Single European Sky (SES), in order to address the objectives of Member States. Military views must be taken into account in the evolution of the European airspace in order to preserve the military's operational requirements and their specificities.
23. The Council encourages Member States to explore ways to cooperate taking into account the benefits of models such as the EATC, recalling the December 2013 European Council Conclusions.
24. The Council encourages Member States, through their national decision making processes, to further utilise and implement the Policy Framework for Systematic and Long-Term Defence Co-operation, adopted in November 2014, in view of reinforcing systematic defence co-operation in Europe, from priority-setting through in-service support to disposal/decommissioning.

Strengthening the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base

25. The Council welcomes the consultation process of all stakeholders co-organised by the Commission and the EDA on the Preparatory Action on CSDP-related research to be launched by the Commission in 2017. The Preparatory Action should, based on a positive evaluation with Member States, lead to a proposal for a wider research programme under the next Multi-annual Financial Framework, taking into account inter alia the Capability Development Plan and other CSDP requirements. The Council stresses that this CSDP-related defence-oriented research should recognise the specificities of the defence sector; be developed in close consultation with Member States at each phase; be aligned and consistent with the EDA activities and complementary to national research programmes for which Member States need to maintain their funding efforts; and that the importance of Member States' decision making is fully recognised, in line with applicable procedures. It welcomes the establishment of the Group of Personalities to provide advice on objectives, governance, modalities and scope. It also calls for the Preparatory Action to have the maximum available

budget according to the financial regulations and due budgetary process to fully test the benefits of EU support for CSDP-related research. Moreover, EDA's capacity to manage this kind of projects will be tested and assessed in the meantime.

26. The Council reiterates the need to maximise dual-use synergies in Research & Technology, in line with the December 2013 European Council conclusions. It invites the Commission, in consultation with EDA, to promote that relevant EU funding mechanisms are made more accessible to the defence industry, and SMEs in particular, to allow for full synergies in dual use technologies, noting that military capabilities remain owned and operated by Member States.
27. Underlining the importance of the EDTIB, the Council welcomes the Commission's and EDA's efforts to support the EDTIB including to enhance its competitiveness and sustainability in the global market, and to stimulate jobs, innovation and growth in Member States. The Council recalls that these efforts should be inclusive with equal opportunities for defence industry in the EU, balanced and in full compliance with EU law. The Council encourages exploring linking investments in the European defence industry to the wider growth and investment agenda as put forward by European Commission President Juncker. It underlines the importance of improving cost-effectiveness and efficiency in the European security and defence market. To this end, it reiterates the need for the implementation and application of the two Defence Directives of 2009³, without prejudice to the Article 346 TFEU. It also encourages the impact of the directives on cross-border defence co-operation in Europe to be analysed by the Commission and EDA in close co-operation with Member States, in order to provide policy recommendations based on this shared assessment. The Council also notes EDA's ongoing work to identify Key Strategic Activities.

³ Directive 2009/43/EC on transfers of defence-related products and Directive 2009/81/EC on defence and security procurement.

28. The Council welcomes the support of the Commission and EDA to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the security and defence sector including through raising awareness about business opportunities and access to EU funding, facilitating access to EU funding programmes and cross border markets. The Council invites the Commission to further develop activities in this regard, including by promoting the participation of SMEs in the Preparatory Action on CSDP-related research. It welcomes the actions deriving from the EDA SME Action Plan and the establishment by the Commission of the Advisory Group on cross-border access for SMEs to defence and security contracts and underlines the need for active participation by all relevant stakeholders, including Member States. The Council looks forward to the results of the Advisory Group in the next 12-18 months.
29. The Council encourages further work on standards and certification to be continued, which will benefit governments and industry alike by reducing costs and enhancing interoperability.
30. Reiterating the political commitment expressed in the December 2013 European Council Conclusions, the Council emphasises the importance of security of supply arrangements for the development of long-term planning and co-operation, and for the functioning of the internal market for defence, and thus underlines the need to further improve security of supply. It notes ongoing efforts to this end, including through the development by the Commission, working with the Member States and in co-operation with the High Representative and the EDA, of a roadmap for a comprehensive EU-wide security of supply regime; and through other initiatives and actions. It recognises the need to explore all elements needed for such a wide-ranging regime.

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31. The Council looks forward to the forthcoming discussion among Heads of State and Government providing strategic guidance to strengthen CSDP and deepen co-operation on security and defence in Europe, in light of the changing security environment, in accordance with the Treaties. The Council will continue to remain seized of the matter, monitor progress and provide input, and will take stock by November 2016 in order to allow the European Council to provide further guidance.