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Delegations will find in the Annex the Council Conclusions on Security and Defence, as approved by the Council at its meeting held on 10 May 2021.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE

1. Recalling its conclusions on security and defence of 17 June 2020, further to the statement of the Members of the **European Council** of 26 February 2021, the Council remains determined to move forward with the implementation of the Union's security and defence agenda in order to take more responsibility for its security. The EU is committed to implementing the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 by pursuing a more strategic course of action and increasing the EU's capacity to act autonomously. Specifically the EU will promote its interests and values, reinforce its resilience and preparedness to effectively tackle all security threats and challenges and promote peace and security. The EU remains committed to enhancing its ability to act as a global security provider through its operational engagement, notably CSDP missions and operations as well as deepening security and defence cooperation amongst Member States, increasing defence investment and enhancing civilian and military capability development and operational readiness within the Union. The Union also remains committed to cooperating closely with its partners, in particular key international organisations and key regional partners. Global and transatlantic cooperation, based on an international rules-based order, with the UN at its core, and effective multilateralism, will benefit from a stronger EU in the field of security and defence. The Council reiterates its commitment to cooperate closely with NATO, in line with the Statement of the Members of the **European Council** of 26 February 2021.

In the face of increased global instability, the Council underlines that significant steps have been taken and also emphasises the need to fully implement the taskings and initiatives launched in particular since 2016 as a follow-up to the EU Global Strategy, as well as to enhance the EU's security and defence policies, tools and instruments.

2. The Council welcomes the ongoing efforts towards an ambitious and actionable Strategic Compass, making best use of the entire EU toolbox, including civilian and military policies, tools and instruments. The Strategic Compass will enhance and guide the implementation of the Level of Ambition in the area of security and defence agreed in November 2016 in the context of the EU Global Strategy. This work contributes to further developing the common European security and defence culture, informed by our shared values and objectives, and respecting the specific character of the security and defence policies of the Member States. For this purpose, the Strategic Compass will define policy orientations, concrete goals and objectives for the next 5 to 10 years, in areas such as crisis management, resilience, capability development and partnerships. It will include specific timelines to contribute to a swift implementation and facilitate regular review at political level.

3. In this context, the Council recognises that the first-ever comprehensive 360-degree EU threat analysis conducted by the EU Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity, based on thorough inputs from Member States' intelligence services and presented to Member States in November 2020, provides an important contribution for developing the Strategic Compass, together with other input. It recognises that this first, valuable experience and its lessons learned should lead to a more regular and comprehensive process of intelligence analyses of threats and challenges to the EU, based on Member States' voluntary inputs. The Council underlines the importance of the ongoing informal reflections among Member States that are taking place as part of the strategic dialogue phase. It invites the High Representative to present a first draft of the Strategic Compass for discussion to the Council in November 2021, with a view to its adoption by Member States in March 2022, in line with the Statement of the Members of the European Council of 26 February 2021.

4. Recalling the valuable support provided by the EU Member States' armed forces to civilian authorities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council emphasises the importance of civil-military coordination in support of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. It calls on the EEAS and Commission services to further contribute to the EU's overall preparedness and resilience, including in particular through civil protection, respecting Member States' competences, existing mandates and building on the work done and subject to further inputs and guidance to be provided by Member States.

5. Reiterating the importance of mutual assistance and solidarity, in line with Article 42(7) TEU and Article 222 TFEU, the Council welcomes the ongoing work and progress achieved towards a strengthened common understanding on the implementation of Article 42(7) TEU, in particular through table-top exercises and scenario-based policy discussions. It looks forward to a document consolidating the lessons identified from these exercises and scenario-based policy discussions to be presented to Member States before the end of the year. The Council calls for further reflections as well as exercises, including on the cyber dimension, demonstrating the solidarity between Member States. The Council recalls that obligations for Member States stemming from Article 42(7) TEU are without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States. It recalls as well that NATO remains the foundation of the collective defence for those States which are members of it.

6. The Council reiterates the impact that environmental issues and climate change have on security and defence, and calls for the comprehensive implementation of the Joint Climate Change and Defence Roadmap in line with the Council Conclusions on Climate and Energy Diplomacy of 25 January 2021. In this regard, the Council reaffirms the need for close cooperation with Member States and pursuing closer cooperation opportunities with relevant international partners such as the UN, NATO, the OSCE and the African Union (AU). It encourages Member States to contribute with concrete actions and invites the High Representative, acting also in his capacity of Vice-President (VP) of the Commission and Head of the European Defence Agency, to provide a first annual update on the implementation process in the first semester of 2022.

7. The Council reiterates its commitments to the EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. It will continue to promote the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and on this basis mainstream the gender dimension in all civilian and military CSDP actions, with a particular focus on the number of women in all functions, including leadership positions. The Council also underlines its commitment to the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. Particular attention should be given to the protection of civilians and the protection of children in armed conflict, in line with the relevant guidelines, including in CSDP Missions and Operations.

Enhancing the Union's civilian and military operational engagement

8. The EU has significantly enhanced its operational capacity and footprint in recent years. The Council underlines the key contribution of the 11 civilian and 6 military CSDP Missions and Operations to global peace and security in the framework of the EU's Integrated Approach to external conflicts and crises and hence to the security of the Union and its citizens. The Council calls to further enhance the robustness and the flexibility of the EU's civilian and military operational commitments to increase their effectiveness, as well as to ensure increased readiness of EU civilian and military capacities to respond to urgent crises. It also reiterates and emphasises the strong need and responsibility for Member States to provide sufficient means and personnel to all civilian and military CSDP Missions and Operations, to ensure the effective implementation of their mandates and the credibility of EU action, and calls for further exploring the development of incentives to improve force generation.

The Council also calls for further work to ensure that the EU can undertake the types of CSDP Missions and Operations described in the 2016 Level of Ambition, across the whole spectrum of crisis management tasks, and invites for further reflections regarding the possible use of Article 44 TEU, and exploring possibilities for a timely and efficient decision-making process. It encourages closer cooperation, coordination as well as developing links between Member States' operational engagements and CSDP missions and operations, having regard to EU mandates and objectives, as well as EU decision-making processes, and calls for more reflections on that topic.

9. The Council welcomes the ongoing progress on the implementation of the more robust EUTM Mali mandate and its closer cooperation with EUCAP SAHEL Mali and EUCAP SAHEL Niger, in line with the regionalisation of the civilian and military CSDP actions in the Sahel, as well as efforts made in the broader framework of the Coalition for the Sahel. It underlines the importance of rapid concrete support to local partners in the centre of Mali and Burkina Faso as a matter of priority, as well as Niger. The Council also welcomes the integration of Joint Special Operations Task Force Gazelle into EUTM Mali. It calls for the inclusion of mentoring tasks in CSDP military training missions, where appropriate.

In line with the Council Conclusions on the Horn of Africa, the Council reiterates the EU's commitment to mobilise the full range of its tools and policies in support of its strategic priorities in the region. In this context, the Council highlights the contribution of a strengthened EUNAVFOR Atalanta mandate to the EU's continued commitment to peace and security in the Horn of Africa, reiterates the urgent need to support EUTM Somalia with the foreseen capabilities in order to allow the Mission to fulfil its mandate. It also recognises the importance of Operation EUFOR Althea's continued presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council also welcomes the further extension of EUAM Ukraine's mandate for another three years and the enhanced contribution of its four Field Offices. It also welcomes the renewal of EUMM Georgia's mandate, in particular the strengthening of its analytical capacities.

10. The Council welcomes the renewal of Operation EUNAVFOR MED Iriini's mandate for two years until 31 March 2023. In accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions, Operation Iriini will continue to contribute to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on Libya and act as a deterrent to arms trafficking, conducting inspections and monitoring suspect activities in an impartial and effective manner.¹ In this regard, the Council stresses the importance of UNSCR 2570 and as well as of the renewal of UN Security Council Resolution 2292(2016). It calls on all flag States to act in good faith and cooperate with inspections by the Operation's assets and calls on all States to step up their efforts to effectively prevent violations of the embargo. It underlines its determination to do its utmost to contribute to the effective enforcement of UNSC Resolution 2292 and subsequent resolutions and calls on the EEAS in cooperation with Operation Iriini to further strengthen the strategic communication. The Council reaffirms the EU's offer and readiness to contribute to the capacity building and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy through Operation Iriini as well as, inter alia, the EU Trust Fund for Crisis Management in Africa (EUTF), including, among others, the Commission programme Support to the Integrated Border and Migration Management in Libya (SIBMMIL). The Council reiterates the EU's commitment to continue supporting the UN-led peace process through the EU Integrated Approach. It also welcomes the sustained presence of EUBAM Libya in country and the Mission's efforts and achievements in support of Libyan authorities on border management, law enforcement and criminal justice.

¹ In accordance with UNSCR 1970 (2011) and subsequent Resolutions, including UNSCR 2292 (2016) and UNSCR 2526 (2020).

11. Noting that the nexus between internal and external security aspects has become increasingly relevant, the Council calls for enhanced efforts to improve synergies between the EU's internal and external policies as well as between CSDP and JHA actors. It also stresses the importance of enhancing the EU's awareness and responsiveness in all phases of the conflict cycle – from early warning and conflict prevention to crisis management, stabilisation and peacebuilding. The Council also welcomes ongoing work on improving the resilience of CSDP Missions and Operations and ability to counter, inter alia, hybrid threats, cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns, in particular in deteriorating security environments, and calls for coordinated communication strategies, as well as enhanced civilian and military coordination and cooperation, including in areas such as medical evacuation and strategic evacuation.

12. The Council welcomes the establishment of the European Peace Facility (EPF) and its future contribution to strengthening the EU's role as a global security provider by offering comprehensive military and defence-related support to partners and filling existing gaps in the area of capacity building, notably, inter alia, through the provision of military equipment within its agreed framework. It also recalls the global geographic scope of the EPF and the importance of ensuring continuity and consistency with existing actions, as well as launching new actions, in line with the EU's Integrated Approach. Assistance measures will be accompanied by proportionate thorough risk assessments and strong safeguards, while maintaining the ability to swiftly respond to conflicts and crises. The Council calls for a swift operationalisation of the EPF and invites Member States and the High Representative, supported by the EEAS, to present proposals for assistance measures, taking due account of EU priorities for action as defined by the European Council and the Council, with a view to implementing the first assistance measures from July 2021. The Council recalls that the EPF aims at strengthening the ability of partner countries to prevent and respond to crises, and contribute to their resilience, in order to enable them to protect their populations better. The Council underlines that the EPF supports, among others, military aspects of peace support operations but recalls that it will not finance capabilities which are funded under the Union budget and that the NDICI– Global Europe will be essential to support, to the fullest extent,

actions related to development and cooperation in the peace and security domains, including by using its pillars and modalities, in particular capacity building assistance to military actors in support of development and security for development (CBDSD). With a view to further enhancing the EU's Integrated Approach, it calls for a close and regular coordination between the Council, the EEAS and the Commission to ensure complementarity and to avoid any duplications or gaps, in particular between the NDICI and the EPF.

13. The Council underlines the need for a more efficient EU planning and command. In this regard, it reiterates the importance of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC). The Council recalls the need to ensure adequate staffing through Member States' contributions and to address remaining infrastructure and secure communication needs for the MPCC as soon as possible. The Council will revert to the issue by November 2021 at the latest with the aim of agreeing a way forward.

It also underlines the importance of the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), and the wider effort, including through the Joint Support Coordination Cell (JSCC), to enhance the EU's role as a civil and military security provider.

14. The Council also recognises that civilian crisis management is more relevant than ever regarding its important contribution to security sector reform, stability and rule of law, which also helps promote local ownership by host countries. The Council welcomes the overall progress made in implementing the Civilian CSDP Compact, which aims to make civilian CSDP more capable, more effective, flexible, responsive, and more joined up with other EU actors. It also acknowledges the positive progress made by the EEAS and Commission services at the EU level and by Member States nationally and calls for a more structured and strategic civilian capability development process, including through relevant training and enhancing civilian - military synergies. The Council recalls the need to increase the visibility of civilian CSDP as well as intensifying efforts to enhance mutually beneficial partnerships with relevant international organisations and partner countries that share EU values and objectives in full respect of the EU institutional framework.

With a view to the Annual Review Conference of November 2021, the Council emphasises the need for Member States, the EEAS and Commission services to continue working towards the full implementation of the Civilian CSDP Compact by early summer 2023, focusing on the 2021 waypoints agreed by the Council in December 2020. The Council recognises that the implementation of the Civilian CSDP Compact will also lay the ground for further work, including on civilian crisis management beyond 2023.

15. As part of strengthening EU security and defence cooperation and crisis management, the Council highlights the European Security and Defence College's efforts to promote a better understanding of CSDP as an essential part of CFSP among the Member States in the area of CSDP training and education, including through the delivery of pre-deployment training for CSDP Missions and Operations and converging of civilian experts' as well as military officers' competences.

Strengthening EU defence initiatives

16. The Council looks forward to the continued implementation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in line with the guidance provided by the PESCO Strategic Review in November 2020, in particular through the relevant Council Recommendation that specifies the more precise objectives for the fulfilment of the more binding commitments. It looks forward to the revision of the Council Decision establishing a common set of governance rules for PESCO projects by November 2021. It underlines the importance of ensuring that the ongoing PESCO projects will deliver concrete results or will reach full operational capability before the end of the next PESCO phase (2021-2025)². It agrees that there is a need for the PESCO participating Member States to improve the fulfilment of all the more binding commitments, with a particular focus on collaborative approach and operational readiness, and looks forward to new ambitious PESCO projects by November 2021 taking into account the CARD findings and recommendations to address shortfalls in the operational and the capability domains, as well as to the High Representative's Annual PESCO Report based on the National Implementation Plans to be presented by July 2021.

² Projects referred in appendix 2 to the Annex of the Council Conclusions on the PSR 2020.

The Council furthermore welcomes the invitation to Canada, Norway and the United States to participate in the Military Mobility PESCO project in line with the three Decisions it adopted, which determined that their participation in this project meets the general conditions under which third States could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects, as set out in Decision (CFSP) 2020/1639 of 5 November 2020. Partners that meet these general conditions could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects in the future in accordance with the invitation procedure contained in Decision (CFSP) 2020/1639, including upon a unanimous decision by the Council.

17. The Council welcomes the swift implementation of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), notably the funding of sixteen projects from the 2019 calls for proposals, including nine that are linked to PESCO projects, illustrating enhanced coherence between EU defence initiatives. The Council also looks forward to the swift adoption of the award decision on the 2020 calls for proposals, welcomes the progress in the implementation of the Preparatory Action on Defence Research and the launch of projects on disruptive technologies, among others. It also welcomes the adoption of the European Defence Fund (EDF) Regulation and looks forward to the adoption of an ambitious 2021 annual work programme that is consistent with the EU Capability Development Priorities derived from the Capability Development Plan. The EDF is instrumental in supporting the competitiveness, efficiency and innovation capacity of the European defence technological and industrial base throughout the Union, cross border cooperation, disruptive technologies and cross border participation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The Council encourages the Commission to facilitate the access of SMEs and non-traditional suppliers as well as to foster investments in defence supply chain. It also calls on the Member States and relevant institutions to continue their work on strengthening and improving the security of supply for defence product and technologies.

18. The Council welcomes the Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries presented by the Commission, which respects the legal bases and different natures of respective EU programmes and initiatives, including the civil nature of the EU Space Programme. Swift and full implementation of this Action Plan, in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders and based on inclusiveness of all Member States, will help the EU remain on the technological edge, thanks to a more competitive strategic industrial and technological base, including in the security and defence domain, and thanks to the more active role of start-ups, SMEs and RTOs. The Council also looks forward to the upcoming Commission Roadmap on key technologies for security and defence including options for boosting research, technology development and innovation and reducing our strategic dependencies in critical technologies and value chains. The Council would welcome these options integrating, as much as possible, the lessons learned from the PADR/EDIDP/EDF implementation, as appropriate. In that context, the work of the European Defence Agency (EDA) on critical technologies, including through the Overarching Strategic Research Agenda (OSRA) and Key Strategic Activities (KSA), should provide useful input. The Council also calls for reinforcing the role played by the EDA in fostering defence innovation including disruptive technologies and, to that effect, invites the HR/Head of the European Defence Agency (HoA) to present options in the latter area by the end of 2021. The Council encourages the Members States and relevant EU institutions to continue their work on strengthening and improving the security of supply for defence products and technologies. It encourages the European Investment Bank to examine further steps with a view to supporting investments in defence research and development activities.
19. Reiterating the importance to ensure coherence among the different EU defence initiatives, while respecting their different character and distinct legal bases, the Council invites the HR, acting also in his capacity of Vice-President of the Commission and HoA, to prepare a third report on interactions, interlinkages and coherence among EU defence initiatives (CARD, PESCO, EDF) before the summer 2021.

Enhancing resilience and providing European access to global commons

20. The Council underlines the need to further strengthen the Union's and Member States' resilience as well as their ability to counter hybrid threats, including disinformation, through the implementation of relevant actions also in the context of the Security Union Strategy, Cybersecurity Strategy and the European Democracy Action Plan, ensuring the coordinated and integrated use of existing and possible new tools for countering hybrid threats at EU and Member States' level, and to improve the EU's preparedness, situational awareness and autonomous analysis capacity and help increase partners' resilience. The Council remains committed to exploring possible responses in the field of hybrid threats including, inter alia, to foreign interference and influence operations, which may cover preventive measures as well as the imposition of costs on hostile state and non-state actors. It also recognises the importance of enhanced security with regard to telecommunications and foreign direct investments, within the scope of EU and national law. The Council looks forward to the progress in the implementation of the initiatives of the Security Union Strategy on countering hybrid threats, such as mainstreaming related considerations into policy-making, identifying sectoral resilience baselines and the online platform for EU-level measures for countering hybrid threats and relevant legal documents. The Council takes note of the fact that the EU Security Union Strategy recognises the Hybrid Fusion Cell of the EU INTCEN as the focal point for hybrid threat assessments and looks forward to the results of the second iteration of the Hybrid Risk Survey based on contribution from both the Member States as well as relevant EU institutions and bodies and invites the Commission, alongside other EU institutions and bodies, to contribute to the survey as appropriate.³ Recalling its Conclusions of June 2020, the Council reiterates the need to strengthen the security of EU institutions and bodies against malicious activities of all kinds.

³ Action 1 of the Joint Framework

21. The Council recognises that global commons (including space, cyberspace and the high seas), are increasingly subject to unilateral appropriation attempts, gatekeeping and conflictual behaviours and is committed to providing for secure European access to those global commons. Further reflections and significant steps forward in the EU's efforts, as appropriate, to promote the EU's interests and values, as well as a rules-based global order, also in the area of security and defence, in this regard are therefore urgently required.

22. Recalling its conclusions of March 2021 on the EU's Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade, the Council underlines the need to further strengthen the EU's cybersecurity and cyber defence capabilities. The Council looks forward to the forthcoming review of the Cyber Defence Policy Framework and the Military Vision and Strategy on Cyberspace as a Domain of Operations with a view to ensuring that cybersecurity and cyber defence are fully integrated into the wider area of security and defence. It welcomes furthermore the efforts to enhance civil-military synergies and coordination on cyber defence and cyber security. It acknowledges the continued implementation of the EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox as an important step to prevent, discourage, deter and respond to malicious cyber activities. It also reaffirms its commitment to the settlement of international disputes in cyberspace by peaceful means to reduce the risk of misperception, escalation and conflict that may stem from cyber incidents. Moreover, the Council calls for more scenario-based discussions dedicated to cyber issues. The Council also stresses the need to continue the efforts to strengthen and develop robust, secure, resilient, scalable, and interoperable classified and non-classified communication and information systems within the EU institutions, bodies and agencies and with Member States.

23. Recalling its Conclusions of January 2021, the Council welcomes the launch of the pilot case of the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept in the Gulf of Guinea and, based on the lessons learned to be presented in May 2021, will examine the possibility of applying this concept in other potential future Maritime Areas of Interest, including in the Indo-Pacific, in line with the Council Conclusions of 16 April 2021 on an EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, including in cooperation with relevant partners. Keeping in mind the need to

fully implement the pilot case in the Gulf of Guinea, it will revert to its implementation by January 2022. Moreover, the Council calls for the further strengthening of the EU's role as a global maritime security provider to promote international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS), to defend the EU's interests, to uphold freedom of navigation including by using EU Member States' naval assets in the context of maritime diplomacy and to deepen the maritime cooperation with partners in the framework of the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its action plan. It also underlines the need for more regular European port calls around the world as an instrument of cooperation and networking with partner countries.

24. The Council reiterates the growing importance of space for the autonomy of the Union and its Member States and recalls that this strategic sector is being increasingly subject to congestion, contestation, tensions and competition. In this context, it underlines the security dimension of the forthcoming EU Space Programme and the role of the HR, the Member States and the Commission in addressing the threats related thereto. The Council calls for further strategic reflections on the EU space and security and defence dimensions, also taking into account the civilian nature of the EU's Space Programme. The Council also underlines the valuable contribution of the EU Satellite Centre to CFSP and CSDP, through its geospatial intelligence support to the Union's intelligence analysis community, the CSDP missions and operations, in particular Operation Irini, and the EU's external action, notably supporting the UN, the OSCE, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), as well as to Member States.
25. The Council welcomes the political agreement on the Connecting Europe Facility 2021-2027 and looks forward to the first calls for proposals for dual-use projects to upgrade transport infrastructure and improve both civilian and military mobility. It calls for the continued implementation of the EU Action Plan on Military Mobility and looks forward to the third joint progress report by the end of summer 2021. It also calls for further reflection on possible actions, relevant actors and new deliverables (in areas such as digitalisation, increasing cyber

resilience of transport infrastructure and systems, the use of artificial intelligence) to improve military mobility within and beyond the EU. The Council also welcomes the progress made on military mobility in the context of PESCO, within the EDA, as well as nationally, and calls to further work on acceleration, simplification and standardisation of border crossing procedures applying a whole-of-government approach. Moreover, the Council calls for more scenario-based discussions and exercises on military mobility.

Reinforcing Partnerships

26. The Council highlights the value of partnerships to contribute to enhancing the EU's capacity to act and their role to support a multilateral, rules-based world order. It reiterates the importance of partnerships in the area of security and defence with international and regional partner organisations, including the UN, NATO, the OSCE, the African Union, the League of Arab States and ASEAN, and calls in particular for further developing bilateral relationships with partner countries, based on a more strategic, and tailored approach and with focus on like-minded partners that share the EU values, including the respect for international law. In this context, the Council looks forward to the implementation of enhanced modalities for the participation of third states in CSDP missions and operations in full respect of the EU's decision-shaping, as well as its decision-making autonomy. This includes possibilities to improve timely information sharing, participation in training and exercises, as well as consultations at an early stage with potential contributing partners to future CSDP missions and operations.
27. The Council welcomes the substantial progress on the implementation of the 2019-2021 EU-UN priorities on peace operations and crisis management, which translated into mutual support between missions and operations in the field, but also enhanced cooperation notably on matters related to rule of law, policing, and the women, peace and security agenda, and in addressing arms control aspects. The signing of the UN-EU Framework Agreement on mutual support is an important step for improving cooperation in the field. In the context of

upcoming consultations on the next set of EU-UN priorities 2022-2024 and building on the Third Progress Report, the Council calls for reinforcing and adapting the EU-UN strategic partnership on crisis management and peace operations, to address emerging security challenges and gaps identified during the COVID-19 crisis and further increase the effectiveness of our missions and operations on the ground. The Council invites the EEAS to present proposals on the next set of priorities 2022-2024 in September 2021.

28. The Council welcomes the significant progress achieved on EU-NATO cooperation since the signature of the 2016 Warsaw and 2018 Brussels Joint Declarations and underlines the importance of an enhanced, mutually reinforcing and beneficial strategic EU-NATO partnership in areas of shared interest with the overall objective of building a genuine and constructive organisation-to-organisation relationship. In light of the common challenges to Euro-Atlantic security, the Council reiterates the importance of reinforced cooperation between the two Organisations in order to promote and uphold shared values and common security interests. In this regard, it reaffirms that the swift and tangible implementation of the Joint Declarations and the common set of proposals remains a key political priority of the EU and reiterates that EU-NATO cooperation continues to take place in full respect of the principles of transparency, reciprocity and inclusiveness as well as the decision-making autonomy and procedures of both organisations. In view of the forthcoming fifth anniversary of the signature of the Warsaw Joint Declaration, the Council encourages further work towards implementation within the agreed framework of the two Joint Declarations and the common set of 74 proposals in close cooperation with and the full involvement of all Member States. In particular, the Council calls for swift progress towards an ambitious implementation of the new Parallel and Coordinated Exercises plan. It reiterates the need for an effective operational cooperation in common areas of deployment, in particular between NATO Maritime Command (MARCOM) and EUNAVFOR Irini, calling for the conclusion of an administrative arrangement, building on the framework achieved for Operation Sophia. In addition, the Council highlights the need for renewed and sustained efforts in areas such as political dialogue, military mobility, countering hybrid threats, including bolstering resilience,

cyber security and defence, and capacity building for partners. Moreover, it acknowledges the need for exploring possibilities to identify, in an inclusive process, new areas to work on together, while respecting EU's competences and institutional balance. Furthermore, the Council reaffirms the importance of unimpeded exchange of information between EU and NATO, in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner, for further enhancing the cooperation between the two organisations across all agreed areas of interaction to foster synergies and avoid unnecessary duplication. The Council looks forward to the forthcoming sixth progress report to be submitted jointly by the HR/VP/HoA and the Secretary General of NATO. While taking into account the different nature of both organisations and their respective responsibilities and memberships and in full respect of the EU's decision making autonomy, the Council recognises the importance of coherence between the reflection processes ongoing within the EU and NATO.

29. Building upon the 2018 EU-OSCE administrative arrangements, the Council encourages the development of a more institutionalised EU-OSCE cooperation in the area of conflict prevention and crisis management.

30. Reaffirming its Conclusions on EU-US relations of 7 December 2020, the Council stresses that a strong transatlantic partnership is vital to ensure and to contribute to our common security, stability and prosperity and reiterates that the European Union and the United States should continue to maintain close cooperation and dialogue in the area of security and defence and further enhance their common efforts, including through enhanced, mutually-reinforcing and beneficial strategic EU-NATO partnership in areas of shared interest in the framework of the 2016 Warsaw and 2018 Brussels Joint Declarations. The Council welcomes the publication of the elements pertaining to security and defence of the Joint Communication of 2 December 2020 on "A new EU-US agenda for global change". Based on shared values, common interests and global influence, the Council recalls its willingness to engage in a regular, comprehensive, strategic, political dialogue with the United States. In that framework, it looks forward to a closer and mutually beneficial cooperation and structured

dialogue in the field of security and defence with the new US administration in areas such as respective security and defence initiatives, disarmament and non-proliferation, the impact of emerging and disruptive technologies, cyber defence, military mobility, countering hybrid threats including disinformation, crisis management and the relationship with strategic competitors. Building upon the important contribution of the US and the EU to transatlantic security, including through recent defence initiatives, such a dedicated dialogue would allow for closer cooperation. A stronger EU in the field of security and defence will also make the transatlantic partnership stronger.
