

# Security and defence cooperation: EU will enhance its capacity to act as a security provider, its strategic autonomy, and its ability to cooperate with partners

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To effectively address rising threats, EU military staff and equipment must be able to move more quickly, to act faster and better protect the security of European citizens

Today, foreign affairs ministers and defence ministers discussed the implementation of the EU Global Strategy in the area of **security and defence**. The Council then adopted conclusions which highlight the significant progress in strengthening cooperation in the area of security and defence and provide further guidance on next steps.

## **Permanent structured cooperation (PESCO)**

The Council adopted today a common set of governance rules for projects within the PESCO framework. The sequencing of the more binding commitments undertaken by member states participating in PESCO is expected to be defined through a Council recommendation, in principle in July 2018. An updated list of PESCO projects and their participants, including a second wave of projects, is expected by November 2018. The general conditions for third state participation in PESCO projects are expected to be set out in a Council decision in principle also in November.

## **Capability development plan and coordinated annual review on defence (CARD)**

The Council approved the progress catalogue 2018, which provides a military assessment of the prioritised capability shortfalls and high impact capability goals to be achieved in a phased approach. It forms a key contribution to the EU capability development priorities. These priorities are recognised by the Council as a key reference for both member states' and EU defence capability development initiatives. The aim of CARD, for which a trial run is being conducted by the European Defence Agency, is to establish

a process which will provide a better overview of national defence spending plans. This would make it easier to address European capability shortfalls and identify new collaborative opportunities, ensuring the most effective and coherent use of defence spending plans.

## European defence fund

The European Defence Fund is one of the key security and defence initiatives by the Commission, reaffirmed in its proposal for the future multiannual financial framework (2021-2027), with a proposed envelope of €13 billion. The European Defence Fund aims to **foster innovation and allow economies of scale** in defence research and in the industrial development phase by supporting collaborative projects in line with capability priorities identified by Member States within the CFSP framework. This will strengthen the competitiveness of the Union's defence industry.

Under the current financial framework, with the same objectives, **the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP)** was agreed by the representatives of the co-legislators on 22 May 2018. **The Council welcomes this agreement.** The EDIDP should aim at **incentivising collaborative development programmes** in line with defence capability priorities commonly agreed by EU member states, in particular in the context of the capability development plan.

## European peace facility

The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy proposed the creation of a European Peace Facility in the context of the future multiannual financial framework, an off-EU budget fund devoted to security and defence. The aim of the facility would be: funding the common costs of military operations under the Common Security and Defence Policy (currently covered by the Athena mechanism); contributing to the financing of military peace support operations led by other international actors (currently covered by, for example, the African Peace Facility); and providing support to third states' armed forces to prevent conflicts, build peace and strengthen international security. **The Council takes note of the proposal** and invites the relevant Council preparatory bodies to **take the work forward and present concrete recommendations** on the proposed facility.

## Military mobility

The aim of improving military mobility is to address those obstacles which hinder the movement of military equipment and personnel across the EU. The High Representative and the Commission presented a joint communication on improving military mobility in the EU on 10 November 2017 and an action plan on 28 March 2018. The Council **welcomes this action plan and calls for its swift implementation.** As a first step in this direction, the **Council approves the overarching high-level part of the military requirements for military mobility** within and beyond the EU.

The Council also stresses that improvement in military mobility can only be

achieved with the full involvement and commitment of all member states, fully respecting their national sovereignty.

The conclusions also touch on other strands of work in the field of EU security and defence, including **strengthening civilian CSDP**, developing a more strategic approach for **EU partnerships on security and defence with third countries**, and increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to counter **hybrid threats**, including further developing the EU's strategic communication approach together with member states.

## Background

On 14 November 2016, the Council adopted conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence. These conclusions set out three strategic priorities in this regard: responding to external conflicts and crises, building the capacities of partners, and protecting the European Union and its citizens.

Since then, the EU has significantly increased its efforts in the area of security and defence. Progress was noted and further guidance provided through Council conclusions on 6 March 2017, on 18 May 2017 and 13 November 2018. Council conclusions on strengthening civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) were adopted on 28 May 2018. At the same time, the EU has also increased its cooperation with NATO, on the basis of the joint declaration on EU-NATO cooperation signed by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and NATO Secretary-General on 8 July 2016 in the margins of the Warsaw summit.

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