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Subject: Council conclusions on Security and Defence in the context of the EU
Global Strategy
- Council conclusions (19 November 2018)

Delegations will find in the Annex the Council conclusions on Security and Defence in the context of the EU Global Strategy, adopted by the Council at its 3652nd meeting held on 19 November 2018.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE

IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EU GLOBAL STRATEGY

1. In the framework of the implementation of the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence, following the guidance by the European Council and recalling its Conclusions on these matters, the Council recalls its firm commitment to implement the EU Level of Ambition in responding to external conflicts and crises, building partners' capacities and protecting the EU and its citizens. By addressing Europe's current and future security and defence needs, the EU will enhance its capacity to act as a security provider and its strategic autonomy, and strengthen its ability to cooperate with partners. It recalls, in line with November 2017 Council conclusions, that this will contribute decisively to collective efforts, also in the context of the transatlantic relationship, and will enhance the European contribution to a rules-based global order with the UN at its core.
2. The Council welcomes the substantive progress made in the area of security and defence during the last two years and stresses the importance of keeping the momentum through the continued engagement of the Member States and EU institutions. It highlights the key role of Member States in the governance of various initiatives.

In this context, the Council today:

Civilian CSDP Compact

3. Welcomes the agreement on a civilian CSDP Compact by the Council and the Member States, marking an ambitious commitment to strengthen civilian CSDP and make it more capable, more effective and responsive, and more joined up in today's changed security environment. It will contribute to the fulfilment of the EU Level of Ambition and its three strategic priorities in the area of security and defence, by performing the CSDP tasks set out in the Treaty on European Union. It highlights that this Compact paves the way towards better addressing the priorities originally defined in Feira and tackling new and long-standing security challenges as identified in the Global Strategy, better implementing the EU's integrated approach to external conflicts and crises as well as fostering cooperation and coordination between CSDP and Commission services and other Justice and Home Affairs actors, addressing the nexus between internal and external security. The Council looks forward to the fulfilment of the Compact and its commitments by early summer 2023 at the latest and will closely follow its implementation.

Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC)

4. Welcomes the positive impact of the MPCC in its command and control of the EU's three military training missions and underlines the relevance of the MPCC, set up in June 2017 as a permanent planning and conduct capability at the military strategic level in Brussels for these missions, in accordance with the principle of avoiding unnecessary duplication with NATO. It stresses the important contribution of the MPCC to the aim for the EU to react in a faster, more effective and more seamless manner as a security provider, as part of its integrated approach to external conflicts and crises.

5. Agrees, on the basis of the report by the High Representative, to integrate the current executive tasks of the EU Operations Centre (OPSCEN) into the MPCC, with the objective to be ready by the end of 2020 to take responsibility for the operational planning and conduct of the non-executive military CSDP missions and one executive military CSDP operation limited to EU Battlegroup size. It stresses that the MPCC should be provided with the necessary human resources as agreed and infrastructure, and its staff be trained and exercised. The Council underlines that staffing needs to be built up gradually and in a sufficient and timely manner, and stresses that all agreed conditions need to be fulfilled in order to reach Full Operational Capability.
6. Notes that this enhanced role of the MPCC is complementary with, and without prejudice to, all other existing command and control options for military CSDP operations.
7. Highlights the continued importance of intensified coordination between the MPCC and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) through the Joint Support Coordination Cell (JSCC) to enable and further strengthen effective civilian-military coordination and cooperation in the operational planning and conduct of CSDP missions, particularly with regard to key mission support areas, in order to maximise impact and efficiencies. It also stresses the importance of enhanced cooperation between the MPCC, within its mandate, and other EU actors as part of the integrated approach.
8. Agrees to the aim to have a next review by the end of 2020, based on a report by the High Representative, prepared in consultation with the Member States, without prejudice to any possible subsequent next steps that would have to be decided by the Council.

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)

In the framework of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO),

9. Welcomes the progress in the implementation of PESCO almost one year after its establishment, with concrete steps forward in the completion of its institutional framework as well as in the setting up and implementation of PESCO projects.

10. Recalls the recent adoption on 15 October 2018 of a Council Recommendation concerning the sequencing of the fulfilment of the more binding commitments undertaken in the framework of PESCO and specifying the more precise objectives. On this basis, the participating Member States will review and update, as appropriate, their national implementation plans by the agreed timelines. In this context, the Council calls on the High Representative to provide her first annual PESCO report, in line with the agreed procedures and timelines.
11. Adopts a Council Decision amending and updating Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 of 6 March 2018 establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO to include the next set of PESCO projects, and calls for the swift implementation of all projects. The Council further stresses the clear European added value of all PESCO projects, which will contribute to fulfilling the more binding commitments and to achieving the EU Level of Ambition, with a view to delivering tangible results in addressing the Union's capability and operational needs. They should continue to be designed and implemented in a manner consistent with the agreed EU Capability Development Priorities and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence. . Taking these objectives into account, the Council invites the PESCO secretariat by spring 2019, ahead of the next call for PESCO project proposals, to present a report on the initial lessons identified, in close consultation with the participating Member States, with a view to improving the process to identify, assess and select PESCO projects.
12. Recognises that a third State could, and would need to, in line with the Council conclusions of 13 November 2017, provide substantial added value to the PESCO projects, contribute to strengthening PESCO and the CSDP and meet more demanding commitments, while fully respecting the principle of decision-making autonomy of the EU and its Member States. In this context, the Council looks forward to the adoption as soon as possible, in principle by the end of 2018, of a Council Decision on the general conditions under which third States could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects, in accordance with Articles 4(2)(g) and 9 of the Council Decision establishing PESCO, the guidance provided in the PESCO notification as well as the Council Decision on the common set of governance rules.

Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD)

13. Welcomes the CARD Trial Run report and encourages participating Member States to implement the recommendations included therein.
14. Taking into account lessons identified, agrees to launch the CARD as a standing activity, starting with the first full CARD cycle in 2019/2020, with a view to provide further guidance on collaborative opportunities and a detailed assessment of the European capability landscape, also taking into account the short-, mid- and long-term trends of capability development. Based on Member States' full engagement, the CARD exercise will further contribute alongside PESCO and the European Defence Fund to promote defence cooperation and investment in defence capabilities.
15. Recognises that the CARD exercise will thereby substitute earlier taskings on conducting assessment exercises under the Policy Framework for Systematic and Long Term Defence Cooperation.
16. Acknowledges that the coherence of output between the CARD, as well as the Capability Development Plan, and respective NATO processes, such as the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP), has been and will continue to be ensured, where requirements overlap while recognizing the different nature of the two organisations and their respective responsibilities.

European Defence Fund

17. Welcomes the progress made, in the context of both current activities under the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) and of the future European Defence Fund, in order to foster the global competitiveness, efficiency and innovation capacity of the European defence technological and industrial base throughout the Union, by supporting collaborative actions and cross-border cooperation between legal entities throughout the Union, in particular Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and middle capitalisation companies (mid-caps), as well as fostering the better exploitation of the industrial potential of innovation, research and technological development, thus contributing to the Union's strategic autonomy and its freedom of action.
18. Regarding current activities, looks forward to the emerging results of the PADR and to the early finalisation later this year of the work programme for the EDIDP with a view to starting funding projects as soon as possible in 2019.
19. Has agreed on a partial general approach on the proposal for a Regulation establishing the European Defence Fund, paving the way for an agreement with the European Parliament expected as early as possible in 2019, without prejudice to the overall agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).
20. Reiterates the need for the implementation of the EDIDP and the further development of the European Defence Fund to strongly involve the Member States, make full use of the views and expertise of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and associate the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Coherence among EU initiatives

21. Acknowledges the progress towards ensuring coherence between the EU initiatives fostering European defence cooperation (CARD, PESCO, European Defence Fund) with a view to supporting the implementation of the EU Capability Development Priorities and contributing to achieving the EU Level of Ambition on security and defence, and calls for enhanced efforts in this regard.
22. Recalling its conclusions of 13 November 2017, the Council invites the High Representative/Vice President/Head of the Agency to continue promoting further synergies and coordination among EU defence initiatives, including CARD, PESCO and the European Defence Fund, in close consultation with Member States. The Council invites the High Representative/Vice President/Head of the Agency to present by mid-2019 a forward looking report on the interactions, linkages and coherence between these initiatives, including the coordination between the supporting institutions and bodies at EU level, and taking into account the respective lessons identified as well as Member States' reporting.

Single set of forces

23. Recalls that, as Member States only have a 'single set of forces' which they can use in different frameworks, the development of Member States' defence capabilities in the EU framework will thus also help to strengthen these capabilities potentially available to the United Nations and NATO.

EU-NATO cooperation

24. Recalling its conclusions on EU-NATO cooperation of 8 June 2018, stresses that security and defence efforts of the EU and NATO substantially contribute, in a coherent manner, to a secure Europe, entailing both benefits and responsibilities, and for those Member States concerned, fostering an equitable sharing of the burden.

25. Reiterates that it continues to ensure coherence and mutual reinforcement between the EU and NATO and that cooperation continues to take place in full respect of the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of both organisations. In this regard, the Council welcomes the second Joint Declaration on EU-NATO cooperation signed on 10 July 2018 by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of NATO. The Council acknowledges ongoing work on the implementation of the common set of proposals covering 74 actions and stresses the importance of ensuring swift and demonstrable progress in all areas. In this context, it particularly welcomes the ongoing EU Hybrid Exercise Multilayer 2018 as an example of Parallel and Coordinated Exercises (PACE).

European Peace Facility (EPF)

26. Recalling its conclusions of 25 June 2018 on the proposal of the High Representative, with the support of the Commission, for a European Peace Facility (EPF), takes note, without prejudice to future decisions, of the intention of the proposed EPF to enhance the Union's ability to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, and thus progress towards fulfilling its Level of Ambition.
27. Emphasises that the governance of the proposed EPF must fully respect Member States' ownership and their key role in CFSP and notes in particular that, in accordance with the Treaty on European Union, the financing of each action under the proposed EPF would require a prior decision by the Council.
28. Takes note of the possibilities offered by the proposed Facility as regards possible actions to be funded, which must be defined by the Council, the potential for increased coordination, coherence and complementarity of EU CFSP actions and with other external instruments under the EU budget, as well as the global geographical scope of the proposed Facility. The Council notes that the proposed EPF would, inter alia, incorporate the funding of actions now financed by the African Peace Facility and, in this context, stresses the importance of the continued EU engagement in support of peacekeeping and stabilisation actions on the African continent.

29. Notes the possibility offered by the proposed EPF to finance capacity building of EU's partners relating to military or defence matters in pursuit of CFSP objectives, while stressing the need to fully use the possibilities to that effect under the EU budget.
30. Underlines that the operational efficiency and flexibility of the Athena mechanism should be preserved.
31. Recalls that the financial aspects proposed for the EPF will continue to be addressed in the context of negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2021-2027 and emphasizes in this context the necessity of coherence between the different external funding instruments.
32. Invites the relevant Council preparatory bodies to continue taking work forward, including by adapting the proposal, as necessary.

Funding of military missions and operations

33. Recalls the important contribution of the Athena mechanism to funding EU military missions and operations and calls for the ongoing review of this mechanism to be completed as soon as possible.
34. Recalling its conclusions of 18 May 2017 on Security and Defence in the context of the EU Global Strategy, and pending the completion of this review, hereby agrees that the Council Declaration on the common funding of the deployment of EU Battlegroups be extended until 31 December 2020.

Military Mobility

35. Recalling its conclusions of 25 June 2018, welcomes the ongoing implementation of efforts in improving the mobility of military personnel, materiel and equipment for routine activities and during crisis and conflict, within and beyond the EU, by all transport modes and in all strategic directions, thus enabling the Member States to act faster and effectively in the context of the Common Security and Defence Policy, national and multinational activities. In this regard, it recalls that the improvement of military mobility can only be achieved with the full involvement and commitment of all EU Member States, following a whole-of-government approach and the involvement of the competent national authorities beyond the ministries of defence, in coherence with relevant initiatives at the EU level including in the context of PESCO and in close cooperation with NATO as part of the framework of the implementation of the Joint Declarations.
36. Reiterates that the national sovereignty, decision-making, laws and regulations, including on military movements, infrastructure investments, environmental rules and principles, remain fundamental and will be fully respected. Any decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis and following the full involvement by all relevant national authorities.
37. Welcomes the further implementation of the PESCO projects related to the area of military mobility as well as taking forward the four measures at national level by the end of 2019 as agreed in the Council conclusions on security and defence of 25 June 2018, in particular paragraph 18 of those conclusions. In this context, the Council will review progress on a yearly basis and will revert to the issue of the implementation of these four national measures and tangible results by summer 2019 including by defining, if possible, more ambitious time-bound objectives.

38. Welcomes the progress in the implementation of the Action Plan on Military Mobility with the completion of the Military Requirements for Military Mobility Within and Beyond the EU as a follow-up to the overarching part which was agreed by the Council in June, incorporating the national input by the EU Member States as well as reflecting the generic military parameters for infrastructure by NATO. Without pre-judging decisions to be taken further in the process, these requirements provide the military input to the next steps in the implementation of the Action Plan, including on transport infrastructure.
39. Calls for the timely examination by the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, the EEAS/EU Military Staff and the EDA, to identify the gaps between the military requirements and the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) parameters, duly taking into account the feasibility, the existing equipment and technical viability, financial and engineering considerations as well as geographic realities. In this context, the Council acknowledges the potential of the proposal, without prejudging discussions under the next MFF, for EU funding through the new Connecting Europe Facility Programme supporting transport infrastructure on the TEN-T Network in order to improve military mobility.
40. Welcomes the ongoing work in the framework of the European Defence Agency in accordance with the Action Plan on Military Mobility with the swift establishment of the two projects: on Customs, highlighting the importance to ensure coherence between the template and the process to be developed with the NATO procedures, and on Cross Border Movement Permission, where the Council looks forward to the conclusion of the relevant Programme Arrangement in early 2019.