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EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



**Report of the High Representative of the Union
for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**

of 14/06/2022

CFSP Report – Our Priorities in 2022

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Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

"CFSP Report - Our priorities in 2022"

This report covers events up to 31 May 2022.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has dramatically changed the geopolitical context of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Russia's war of aggression challenges the universal principles of sovereign equality, independence and territorial integrity and has also grave repercussions around the world. What is more, the Russian invasion hit the world at a time when countries are still recovering from the economic and social effects of the Covid pandemic, which left many of them deeply vulnerable. An increasingly assertive, ambitious and authoritarian China adds to global tensions. China's refusal to condemn Russia's war against Ukraine risks new geopolitical polarization, which could lead to further fragmentation and weakening of the rule-based multilateral order and gravely impair international cooperation, including in areas critical to human security like climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, and the management of global commons and migration. These and other challenges requiring global solutions will be increasingly difficult to tackle in an increasingly fragmented, transactional and confrontational world. The threats the EU faces on the international stage, as well as the need for urgent and determined action, have thus been accelerated and amplified.

Given these existential challenges, the EU has so far demonstrated a remarkable sense of unity and resolve in responding swiftly and forcefully to Russia's aggression. Preserving this unity in the mid-to long-term, building on the EU's new "geopolitical awakening," and continuing to strengthen its strategic autonomy and resilience will be crucial tasks in the months and years ahead. One concrete step in this direction was the adoption of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence in March 2022, which sets out ambitious goals and timelines to strengthen the EU's security and defence and helps Member States take a quantum leap forward in this domain. As underlined by HR/VP Borrell in his recent statement on Europe Day, published on 8 May, Europe's process of learning how to use the language of power is speeding up. In an increasingly confrontational geopolitical environment, this is necessary to complement the EU's continued efforts and commitment to work with like-minded partners around the world to safeguard the rules-based multilateral system, to promote international cooperation and to strengthen international efforts for peace and global stability and prosperity.

(1) GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITIES

Europe

As likeminded partners, the **non-EU Western European countries** generally support EU foreign policy. We cooperate on global issues (Covid, climate change, migration, security), which

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strengthens multilateralism. The EU conducts, on the basis of shared values and security interests, with some of these countries regular informal dialogues on CSFP/CSDP, sanctions and human rights. There has been a very close cooperation on the response to Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine. The non-EU Western European countries have demonstrated unity with the EU by supporting EU sanctions and political messages.

EU-Norway close co-operation has been further strengthened with Norway as non-permanent member of UN Security Council including in the area of security and defence. The EU's Strategic Compass emphasises Norway as "our most closely associated partner" and commits to deepen this cooperation.

There also exists a good cooperation with **Switzerland** on a range of CSFP and CSDP issues, which is expected to be deepened when Switzerland takes up its role as a non-permanent UNSC member (2023). Notwithstanding its traditionally neutral stance, Switzerland has decided to autonomously take over EU restrictive measures against Russia and Belarus.

The EU and **Andorra, Monaco** as well as **San Marino** are enhancing their relations including by pursuing negotiations on Association Agreement(s) regarding their participation in the internal market.

Arctic cooperation, based on the Joint Communication published in October 2021, is a priority for the EU. In view of Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, cooperation with Russia has been put on hold.

With regard to the **Western Balkans**, the EU continued its strong focus on advancing the EU integration of the region, as a geopolitical priority. Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine resonated strongly across the region. However, the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue continued and all Western Balkan partners aligned with the EU position during votes on UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions condemning Russia's invasion and on its humanitarian impact. **Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia** aligned fully with EU foreign policy, including sanctions on Russia. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** aligned with EU restrictive measures on Russia, and **Kosovo** aligned unilaterally with those measures. The Foreign Affairs Council held three discussions on enhancing engagement with the region, including on measures to strengthen resilience, also in the context of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Western Balkans partners began to provide inputs to Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) discussions and were debriefed after FAC meetings. In light of the deteriorating security situation internationally, and as a precautionary measure, both the EU Operation EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and EULEX Kosovo were reinforced starting from March 2022. In order to support stability ahead of the Serbian elections in April 2022, a Reserve Formed Police Unit from the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF) was deployed to support EULEX Kosovo. This is the first operational deployment of the EGF in a civilian CSDP mission and paves the ground for enhanced cooperation in the future.

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The political context of EU-Turkey relations slightly improved. The European Council of June 2021 welcomed the de-escalation in the Eastern Mediterranean, and reiterated the EU's readiness to engage with Turkey in a phased, proportionate and reversible manner to enhance cooperation in a number of areas of common interest, subject to the established conditionalities set out in March 2021 and in previous European Council conclusions. On this basis, reengagement with Turkey gained momentum. Several rounds of High Level Dialogues on sectoral issues were held and exchanges on regional issues intensified. As regards Russia's unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine, Turkey expressed support to Ukraine's territorial integrity and to the relevant UNGA resolutions, and implemented the 1936 Montreux Convention provisions on passage from the Turkish straits in a way to prevent an escalation of Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine. Turkey has also presented itself as a facilitator of talks between Russia and Ukraine. Nevertheless, Turkey did not align or implement EU sanctions against Russia and Belarus and has not closed its airspace to Russian airplanes (except those coming from Syria). The lack of advancement in the Cyprus settlement process was coupled with the further reopening of the fenced-off town of Varosha, which the HR/VP strongly condemned on behalf of the EU on 27 July 2021. Violations of Greek national airspace by Turkish military jets, including flights over inhabited areas, continued. The domestic situation in Turkey, notably in the area of fundamental rights and economic governance deteriorated further. Regarding CSDP, Turkey participated in Operation EUFOR ALTHEA as the biggest non-EU troop contributor and continued to express general interest in cooperation with the EU on security and defence issues.

As of 1 January 2021, the **United Kingdom** has become a third country, including in the area of CFSP. For the time being, there is no structured EU-UK cooperation in the area of foreign, security and defence policy, but ad hoc pragmatic EU-UK cooperation on the most urgent foreign and security policy issues has continued throughout the year and increased after the signing of the Establishment Agreement for the EU Delegation in London. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) contains a number of foreign policy related provisions to be implemented. Overall, 2021 was marked by the difficult negotiations on the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement, in particular its Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, and the TCA. The TCA entered into force on 1 May 2021. The EU and the UK also reached an agreement by early 2022 on the implementing arrangement to the security of information agreement.

Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asia

The **Eastern Partnership (EaP)** Summit in December 2021 sent a strong signal of the EU's support to the region and adopted a new agenda outlining economy, rule of law, green transition, digital agenda and civil society as key priorities, under an overall framework of resilience. The new agenda will be accompanied by the Economic and Investment Plan which will mobilise up to EUR 2.3 billion. The Russian military aggression against Ukraine has changed the overall context in the Eastern neighbourhood, hence the policy may require recalibration in the mid to long term. The Eastern Partnership remains a valid tool to address current challenges and to facilitate the region's cooperation with the EU. Belarus has suspended its participation in the EaP framework, however the EU continues to engage with Belarusian people, civil society and democratic forces.

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The regional cooperation fora remained an important tool for the EU's cooperation with Russia to address global challenges. After Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the EU together with other partners decided to suspend Russia and Belarus from all activities in the Baltic and Barents area as well as in the Northern Dimension. The EU also suspended all financial arrangements with Russia and Belarus in the Black Sea area. Nevertheless, the EU together with partners continued its engagement and sectoral cooperation in all these formats in order to enhance sustainable development, to promote people-to-people contacts or to address environmental aspects.

The EU further actively supported **the Organisation for Security and Cooperation** in Europe (OSCE) in order to promote multilateralism and the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the region. The EU also enhanced political cooperation with the OSCE, through the High Level Dialogue at Secretary General's level, which in 2021 focused on conflict prevention, the situation in Afghanistan and the climate-security nexus. The EU also facilitated discussions concerning the Renewed European Security Architecture. Unfortunately, Russia rejected these proposals and chose a path of confrontation leading to the war with Ukraine.

Regarding **bilateral relations with EaP partner countries**, the Association Agreements with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia and the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with Armenia remained the main bilateral frameworks for pursuing the EU's relations. The negotiations on the new agreement with Azerbaijan continued. On 28 February, Ukraine applied for EU membership - followed on 3 March by Georgia's and Moldova's applications.

The EU continued to support substantial reforms efforts in **Ukraine**. The EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform in Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine) provided its strategic advice and practical support to Ukrainian authorities and civilian security sector agencies. In June 2021, EU launched a cyber-security dialogue to strengthen Ukraine's resilience. On 12 October 2021, an EU-Ukraine Summit took place in Kyiv reaffirming mutual commitment to strengthening the political association and economic integration. In August 2021, with EU high-level participation, the Inaugural Summit launched the International Crimea Platform – a consultative and coordination format aiming at peacefully restoring Ukraine's control over its territory within internationally recognised borders.

Throughout 2021, Russia continued its destabilising actions in **eastern Ukraine**, in the illegally annexed Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, along with the unprovoked build-up of military personnel and equipment along the Ukrainian border. No progress was achieved regarding the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Russia continued its passportisation policy in Ukraine's non-government controlled areas in Donbas (NGCA). Local residents were encouraged to vote in the September 2021 Duma elections. NGCA-produced goods were granted preferential access to Russian market.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was launched on 24 February 2022 and was met with EU's immediate response based on three established tracks: 1) the diplomatic track to isolate and hold Russia accountable, 2) wide-ranging support to Ukraine, including military, financial, and humanitarian, and 3) far-reaching and hard-hitting sanctions, including individual restrictive measures, sectoral measures, and restrictions on economic relations with the non-government

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controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. EUAM Ukraine evacuated its international Mission members from Kyiv and from its field offices in Mariupol, Odesa, Lviv and Kharkiv, and established temporary Headquarters outside Ukraine. In March 2022, the Council amended the mandate of EUAM Ukraine adding the additional task of advising Ukrainian authorities to facilitate the flow of refugees from Ukraine to Poland, Romania and Slovakia, and facilitating the flow of humanitarian aid into Ukraine. In April 2022, the Council further amended the mandate of EUAM Ukraine to provide support to Ukrainian authorities to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of any international crimes committed in the context of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. Since the beginning of May, EUAM Ukraine's temporary headquarters is located in Rzeszów (Southern Poland), from where the Mission has started to redeploy to Ukraine in view of completing full redeployment by the end of August, provided the security situation allows for it.

In the **Republic of Moldova**, the government pursued reforms contributing to the implementation of the Association Agreement. The political dialogue intensified with the EU-Republic of Moldova Association Council taking place on 28 October 2021, followed by the launching of a high-level dialogue on energy. The EU supported Moldova in facing the energy crisis prompted by Russia and provided 60 million EUR to mitigate the impact of soaring energy prices. In December 2021, the EU decided to support Moldova with assistance measures under the European Peace Facility in providing non-lethal assistance to its military forces. The political and security dialogue was held on 18 March 2022, stepping up cooperation in the area of security. The Republic of Moldova has shown strong solidarity and generosity with Ukraine, by supporting EU efforts in international fora and by hosting large numbers of refugees. The EU has stepped up its efforts to enhance the country's overall resilience and remained firm in its commitment to a comprehensive, peaceful and sustainable settlement of the Transnistrian conflict.

Since July 2021, the situation in **Georgia** has been characterised by heightened political polarisation, particularly in the context of the local elections in October 2021. Key electoral and judicial reforms have been stalling, deepening political polarisation, affecting progress in the areas of democratisation and the rule of law. The EU and Georgia held regular political dialogues under the framework of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, including the Association Council in July 2021. The EU has also been actively involved in conflict resolution efforts through the work of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia and the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia). EUMM Georgia continues to monitor compliance by all sides with the EU brokered Six-Point Agreement of 12 August 2008. In December 2021, the EU decided to support Georgia's resilience through assistance measures under the European Peace Facility, providing non-lethal assistance to its military forces.

In **Belarus**, unrelenting human rights violation and repressions against all segments of the Belarusian society continued. The EU responded to this repression in a united way through its policy of **Support, Solidarity, and Sanctions**. Since the falsification of the 2020 presidential election, the EU has committed almost EUR 65 million in assistance to the Belarusian people. The EU remains ready to invest up to €3 billion in Belarus after a future democratic transition. Since October 2020, the EU has also progressively expanded its restrictive measures in light of the

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situation in Belarus. The legal framework for those restrictive measures was prolonged until 28 February 2023. On 23 May, the Belarusian authorities, in an inadmissible step, forced a civilian plane to perform an emergency landing in Minsk, retaining an independent journalist from Belarus. Furthermore, between summer and the end of 2021, the Belarusian regime orchestrated a migration crisis at the EU's external borders. The EU reacted swiftly to this hybrid attack, including by an extensive outreach to the countries of origin and transit, fighting disinformation and providing humanitarian support to migrants stranded in Belarus (€ 700.000 mobilised by the EU to this end). The EU also imposed additional sanctions on 2 December 2021, including on officials and companies that had helped incite and organise illegal border crossing for political purposes. Those actions helped to shut down various routes to Belarus and to halt new inflows of migrants to the country.

The EU worked on strengthening bilateral relations and supporting the reform agenda with **Armenia** while supporting its democratic path through the implementation of the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). The EU-Armenia Partnership Council, the first one since the entry into force of the agreement took place in May 2022 and confirmed the role of the agreement as a blueprint for reforms in Armenia.

The EU continued cooperation with **Azerbaijan** to help to diversify its economy. At the same time, the EU underscored the importance of the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in our relationship. Azerbaijan remained a strategic energy partner. On 16 March 2022 the 3rd round of the Azerbaijan-EU security dialogue took place in Baku,

The EU has been committed to work closely with **Armenia and Azerbaijan** in overcoming tensions and promoting a secure, stable, peaceful and prosperous South Caucasus. The President of the European Council Michel has launched a process of direct contacts involving the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Azerbaijan. The EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia has continued his local outreach to Armenia and Azerbaijan and has facilitated discussions between the Sherpa's from the two countries. The EU mobilised EUR 17 million for humanitarian aid for all affected populations and for post-conflict recovery to enable restoring people's lives and strengthening their resilience. The EU is ready to continue contributing to a durable and comprehensive settlement.

Russia

In June 2021, the European Council held a strategic discussion on EU-**Russia** relations, taking into account the Joint Communication on EU-Russia relations that had been prepared by the High Representative and the Commission (JOIN(2021)20).

Since November 2021, the EU followed with increased concern and in close exchange with its international partners, the unusual Russian military activity along Ukraine's borders and on the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. This included coordinated preparations for a strong and quick reaction following reports of a possible Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russia's demands on security guarantees published in two so called "draft treaties" in December 2021 further escalated the developments.

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Despite repeated calls and diplomatic efforts by the EU and its international partners on Russia to de-escalate, Russia's political leadership decided unilaterally and unprovoked to launch on 24 February 2022 a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. On the same day, the European Council condemned the invasion in the strongest possible terms and reiterated its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

The EU engaged in isolating Russia internationally. Landmark decisions were the two UN General Assembly resolutions adopted on 2 March on the "Aggression against Ukraine" and on 24 March on "Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine" as well as the early termination of Russia's membership in the UN Human Rights Council after the UN General Assembly resolution of 7 April. The EU adopted unprecedented and hard-hitting sanctions packages. It imposed sectoral measures in several fields, constraining Russia's economic activities, as well as individual measures against a large number of individuals and entities. The EU's sanctions have and will continue to have a significant effect on Russia's economy. They increased the cost of the war for Russia and showed the EU's determination and unity.

The period that followed Russia's military invasion of Ukraine was also marked by a suspension of most of the EU's selective engagement with Russia. For the first time the EU, together with its international partners, attributed the responsibility for a cyberattack to a Russian state actor.

Central Asia

The EU maintained high-level political engagement with the countries of Central Asia as they continued to be confronted with the severe socio-economic repercussions of the Covid pandemic.

The Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, in August 2021, generated new challenges for the region, including potential migration flows and a resurgence of violent extremism. High level visits to the region by HR/VP Borrell (to attend the Central-South Asia Connectivity conference in Tashkent in July 2021) and by the Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis (for the EU-Central Asia First Economic Forum in Bishkek in November 2021) underscored the geopolitical interest of the EU to develop its relations with Central Asia. The 17th EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting, chaired by HR/VP Borrell on 22 November 2021 in Dushanbe (Tajikistan), provided an opportunity for the EU to convey a strong message of commitment to the region, which was also illustrated in progress towards the conclusion of a new-generation EU-Uzbekistan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA). The EU expressed strong concerns about the violent political troubles that took place in January 2022 in Kazakhstan and has asked for a credible and independent investigation of these events. The EU has engaged closely with the five Central Asian states following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, emphasising its principled position and encouraging compliance with international sanctions.

Middle East and North Africa

In 2021, building on the new momentum created by the intra-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) reconciliation, the EU has seized the opportunity to revamp the partnership with the **Gulf** and the

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GCC countries by reactivating high-level political engagement. HR/VP Borrell undertook first visits to the **Gulf region** in the autumn of 2021 and March 2022. He proposed to strengthen and upgrade relations with the Gulf partners to allow closer cooperation on global challenges, including climate and security. This led to many engagements at senior levels in **Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait**. The EU will open a Delegation to **Qatar** by summer 2022 and plans to open a Delegation to **Oman** in 2023.

The HR/VP and the European Commission decided to accompany this regained impetus with the presentation of a **Joint Communication on ‘a Strategic Partnership with the Gulf’**, adopted on 18 May 2022, to give the EU’s relations with the GCC and its Member States a more strategic orientation. The focus is on concrete proposals for a strengthened cooperation on global issues (green transition, energy, climate, trade). Regional stability, global security, development and people-to-people cooperation are also addressed.

The EU has continued working along this positive trajectory with the organisation of the 30th **EU-GCC** Joint Cooperation Committee in Riyadh on 3 February 2022 and the resumption of the EU-GCC Joint Council held in Brussels on 21 February 2022. The first EU – **Saudi Arabia** Human Rights Dialogue took place in September 2021.

The EU’s relations with **Iraq** intensified in 2021. At the June 2021 Foreign Affairs Council, Ministers engaged with Iraqi Foreign Minister Hussein, and reviewed latest developments in Iraq. HR/VP Borrell visited Baghdad and Erbil ahead of the first Election Observation Mission, which was deployed to Iraq for the 10 October elections. Energy sub-committee and Cooperation Committee meetings were held as well, and a multiannual indicative programme was adopted in December 2021. High-level engagement between the EU and Iraq allowed tackling Belarusian hybrid activity against the EU, in particular to address the situation of Iraqi migrants along the EU border with Belarus. Following technical exchanges, in March 2022, the EU removed Iraq from its list of countries presenting deficiencies in its regulatory framework pertaining to anti-money laundering. In April 2022, the Council extended the EU advisory mission in support of security sector reform in **Iraq** (EUAM Iraq) until 30 April 2024.

The EU continued its support to the peace process in **Yemen**, led by the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, including financial contributions to the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism and to the UN Peace Support Facility. The EU transposed new UN Security Council Sanctions on the Houthis in March 2022. A development cooperation package of Special Measures was adopted in mid-2021, and humanitarian assistance was increased for 2022.

The EU continued to support UN-led efforts to achieving a lasting solution to the **Syrian** conflict. In May 2022, the HR/VP chaired the **sixth Brussels Conference** on the future of Syria and the region, at which a total amount of 6.4 billion EUR in pledges were raised. The EU continues to impose sanctions on leading members and entities of the Syrian regime. From a security perspective, the EU is working on a package of measures to help alleviate the pressure on camps in

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North East Syria, where persons believed to be affiliated to Da'esh and their families are detained, by supporting rehabilitation centres and reintegration efforts of Syrian/Iraqi nationals.

With the second Berlin and Paris conferences, the EU continued to work in support of the UN-facilitated political process in **Libya**, repeatedly calling for the renewal of the legitimacy of institutions through elections as well as the implementation of the Ceasefire agreement (withdrawal of foreign forces, fighters, mercenaries and armed groups). The EU provided concrete support to confidence-building measures such as the reopening of the coastal road. The HR/VP, the President of the European Council and several Commissioners visited Libya in 2021 to discuss concrete offers for cooperation with Libya, in particular on capacity-building of Libyan institutions. Before the postponement of the national elections initially scheduled for 24 December 2021, the EU had supported the High National Elections Commission. In June 2021, the Council extended the mandate of the European Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya) until 30 June 2023. The new mandate offers the possibility to support the peace process in Libya, within the scope of EUBAM's core areas of engagement (law enforcement, border management and criminal justice). Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI continued to be the only implementer of the UN arms embargo on Libya.

In 2021, the implementation of the new **Agenda for the Mediterranean** (adopted in February 2021) continued, along with the full EU toolbox. At the 2nd EU-Southern Ministerial meeting held on 29 November 2021 in Barcelona, ministers reviewed the state of play of the implementation of the Agenda and focused on combatting climate change.

The EU continued substantive financing and political steering as Co-Chair alongside Jordan of the **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)**, which remains the focal point to enhance regional cooperation in the Southern Neighbourhood. The Sixth UfM Regional Forum was held on 29 November 2021 in Barcelona after other successful UfM sectoral Ministerial meetings on energy, environment and climate action, employment and labour.

The HR/VP visited **Tunisia** on 9-10 September 2021 where he met with the President of the Republic, his Head of Cabinet and Minister of Finance, as well as with representatives of the main political parties and civil society organisations. The EU closely monitored and made its voice heard on important political developments in the country. The EU also continued to impose restrictive measures against persons responsible for misappropriation of State funds until 2023 with a mid-term revision in June 2022.

Together with **Morocco**, the EU has continued to develop a true “Euro-Moroccan partnership for shared prosperity” and to engage in the political and sectoral dialogue in various areas of common interest. In June 2021, the EU and Morocco announced their intention to establish a Green Partnership, an ambitious initiative that will advance the external dimension of the European Green Deal. The EU welcomed the appointment of Staffan de Mistura as the new Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Western Sahara in October 2021, which has given new impetus to the UN efforts towards a political solution of the conflict. The EU and Morocco will continue to jointly

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address the multiple global challenges based on shared political priorities and within the framework of the EU-Morocco Association Agreement.

The EU continued to work towards strengthening its partnership with **Algeria** in the context of the Association Agreement, with an update of the EU Algeria Partnership Priorities (2021-2027). Technical and senior level meetings in the framework of the Association Agreement have continued and addressed key areas of mutual interest such as energy, security and economic reforms. In bilateral contacts, the EU has regularly underlined Algeria's key role in maintaining regional security. In the framework of the Association Agreement, technical dialogues on the political situation, energy, regional security and counterterrorism will support the preparation of the next Association Council.

The EU and **Egypt** agreed on new Partnership Priorities setting the political framework of the partnership until 2027. In February 2022, President Al-Sisi visited Brussels for the EU-African Union Summit and had bilateral meetings with the EU leaders. Energy and climate cooperation gained further momentum in view of Egypt's Presidency of COP27. In April 2022, the EU and Egypt were successful in their joint candidacy bid to co-chair the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) for the next leadership period. The human rights situation was regularly addressed both in multilateral fora and bilaterally. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights carried out his first visit to Egypt in April 2022 to discuss inter alia the implementation of Egypt's National Human Rights Strategy.

The EU welcomed the long-awaited formation of a **Lebanese** government in September 2021 and deployed an Election Observation Mission in the context of the 15 May 2022 parliamentary elections. The EU remains committed to assisting the Lebanese people in overcoming the multi-faceted crisis affecting the country, implementing reforms, supporting its economic recovery and pursuing its democratic renewal. The EU support remains crucial in addressing the socio-economic consequences of the Syrian crisis, the Covid pandemic and the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, notably regarding food insecurity in the whole Middle East and North Africa region. On 30 July 2021, the Council adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures concerning Lebanon, with a view to bolstering democracy, rule of law and economic reforms.

The EU and **Jordan** agreed on new Partnership Priorities setting the political framework of the partnership until 2027. The President of the European Commission visited Jordan in April 2021 and His Majesty King Abdullah II visited Brussels in May 2021. The Association Council was held in June 2022. As reiterated in bilateral exchanges with the King of Jordan by President of the European Council and the HR/VP (April 2022), the EU fully acknowledges the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom and the importance of preserving the status quo of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem.

With regard to the **Middle East Peace Process (MEPP)**, the EU remains committed to a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the two-state solution, respecting all relevant UN resolutions, and internationally agreed parameters. The EU continued to encourage engagement between the parties to restore a political horizon and open the path towards

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the relaunch of the peace process. This is also a priority for the EUSR MEPP, who engages actively with the parties and relevant stakeholders exploring opportunities for revitalizing the peace process. Following the escalation in and around Gaza in May 2021, the EU has welcomed the easing of some restrictions, such as an increase in work permits for Palestinians. But as the measures did not allow rapid stabilization and recovery, the EU has continued to call for further lifting of restrictions, underlining the need for unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza. The EU has spoken actively against any unilateral measures, including consistently reiterating its strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy, settler violence, demolitions and evictions. Immediately having taken office, **Israeli** Foreign Minister Yair Lapid was invited for an informal lunch with the EU27 Foreign Ministers in the margins of the July 2021 FAC to discuss EU-Israel relations. HR/VP also met with **Palestinian** PM Mohammed Shtayeh in October 2021 and in May 2022, and discussed continuing EU support to Palestinian state building.

The informal Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) **with the League of Arab States (LAS)** in December 2021 was used by both sides to reaffirm interest and commitment to enhance cooperation and dialogue. The EU-PSC dialogue and the SOM scheduled for 8 and 9 June 2022 in Cairo aim at giving new impetus to EU-LAS cooperation, in view of a further EU-LAS Ministerial and Summit meeting where relevant.

The EU has continued to engage with the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**, including through a joint webinar on election monitoring held in 2021 and another webinar on interfaith held in February 2022. The SOMs held on 28 March 2022 in Jeddah helped identify a range of further activities on areas of mutual interest that will be implemented over the coming years.

Despite the continuing challenges in the overall implementation of the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**, the EU remained strongly committed and worked hard to preserve the agreement. The High Representative, as coordinator of the JCPOA Joint Commission, steered the diplomatic efforts to bring the agreement back on track and facilitated the intense negotiations in Vienna aimed at a return to the JCPOA by the United States and the resumption of full implementation of respective JCPOA commitments by the United States and by Iran.

During a year marked by elections leading to a new president and government taking office in Tehran and by consequential developments in the Gulf and the neighbouring Afghanistan, efforts were made to further develop the EU bilateral cooperation with Iran and, to this aim, a Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 was adopted for the first time ever to better frame the priority areas of cooperation. Close attention was given to issues related to the regional security context.

The promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Iran remained one of the top priorities, with focus on freedom of expression, respect of a fair trial, safe and humane detention conditions, and release of EU-Iranian dual nationals and human rights defenders who were arbitrarily detained. In April 2021, the EU decided to extend by one year its restrictive measures responding to serious human rights violations in Iran.

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Africa

In Africa, the EU continued to develop the continent-to-continent partnership, despite the Covid pandemic and related challenges. The much-anticipated **AU–EU Foreign Affairs Ministerial** meeting and the subsequent **AU-EU Summit** took place in Kigali on 25 – 26 October 2021 and on 17-18 February 2022 in Brussels, respectively. The two-day EU-AU Summit had a strong participation by EU and AU leaders. Innovative thematic roundtables enabled participants to engage in dynamic and frank exchanges. A political, concise and operational Summit Declaration entitled “Joint Vision for 2030” announced a renewed partnership. The four main deliverables from the Summits are the Global Gateway Investment, Health and Education Package of at least EUR 150 billion; a renewed and enhanced cooperation for peace and security; an enhanced and reciprocal partnership for migration and mobility and a renewed commitment to multilateralism. On the operational follow up, work has begun to operationalise the deliverables along with relevant Delegations. In line with the commitments made during the Summit, and as a direct response to the geopolitical dynamics exacerbated by the Russian aggression against Ukraine, one key priority will also be to maintain and deepen regular outreach to African countries at all levels and in multiple formats. First votes at UNGA on this crisis were both a test case and a clear signal for more sustained and tailor-made dialogue with African countries on multilateral issues.

The EU also stepped up its support to Africa for both **Covid response and longer term socio-economic recovery**. The EU’s objectives in the fight against Covid in Africa are three-fold: 1) to support access to vaccines; 2) to boost Africa’s vaccines production capacity; 3) to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic and enhance global cooperation. On access to vaccines, the EU committed to share 450 million vaccines by mid-2022 and now supports Africa overcoming the challenges faced to increase the vaccination rate, despite the number of vaccines available. The EU has also developed an initiative to produce Covid vaccines in regional hubs in Africa. Team Europe funding has been mobilised in Senegal, South Africa, Rwanda, Ghana, and opportunities are being assessed in Botswana, Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Guinea, Egypt and Morocco. All over the continent, political dialogues under **Article 8 of the Cotonou** agreement have been successfully organised. At political level, the **AU - EU annual dialogue on Human rights**, allowed both actors to review and reinforce their cooperation on topics such as economic, social and cultural rights, business and human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the abolition of the death penalty. Gender equality and women's empowerment is also a priority of the EU’s external action, supported via the implementation of the **EU’s Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III)** through national and regional implementation plans (CLIPs).

In the **Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region**, Rwanda and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) deployed military missions to fight armed groups in **Mozambique’s** Cabo Delgado Province over the summer, resulting in a relative improvement of the security situation on the ground. In July 2021, the Council adopted a decision setting up an EU military training mission in Mozambique (EUTM Mozambique). The Mission trains and supports the Mozambican armed forces in protecting the civilian population and restoring safety and security in the Cabo Delgado province. Assistance measures under the European Peace Facility were approved to equip these units with non-lethal equipment.

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The EU continued the implementation of its integrated approach towards the country, encompassing diplomatic, humanitarian, development, security and peace-building actions. In May 2021, the Council gave a mandate to the High Representative to negotiate an agreement with **the Seychelles** to transfer drugs and arms traffickers to the island country, under the EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta. In June 2021, the EU-SADC had a successful Senior Officials Meeting and a Ministerial Meeting with the **SADC**. In June as well, the EU launched the negotiations of a Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement with **Angola**, the first ever agreement of this type worldwide. Both sides held talks during a Senior Officials Meeting in October, paving the way for a Ministerial Meeting in mid-2022. Council Conclusions were adopted in February 2022 on **Zimbabwe**, which included the lifting of suspended restrictive measures against three individuals.

In the **Horn of Africa**, the overall situation has worsened and is increasingly fragmented due to continuous and emerging political and security crises compounded by the severe consequences of a devastating climate-induced drought and the impact of Covid. The impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine including the blockade of key exports is expected to further aggravate the situation. In **Ethiopia**, the conflict on Tigray entered its second year, and despite some positive developments following the humanitarian truce of March 2022, humanitarian access is still not sufficient and the operational environment remains constrained. The EU continues its strong political commitment encouraging further progress and the opening of political negotiations as well as addressing widespread human rights violations and abuses of civilians by the warring parties including **Eritrea**. The military coup in **Sudan** on 25 October 2021 – vigorously condemned by the EU – halted Sudan's hailed transition towards democracy. The economy is in downfall and continuous protests demonstrate mounting political frustration over soaring electricity, fuel and bread prices. The EU seeks to get the democratic transition back on track as a democratic Sudan remains the best guarantee for the long-term stability of the country and is an essential corollary to Sudan's role in the broader region. In **Somalia**, the electoral process has incurred serious delays where the incumbent authorities have seemed inclined to consolidate their hold on power, including amplified calls for Somali sovereignty and territorial integrity. As an example, the Somali government rejected the renewal of the UNSCR on anti-piracy (UNSCR 2608 (2021)). As a result, in March 2022, the United Nations Security Council did not extend the resolution which, among other measures, allowed for the fight against piracy and armed robbery of international forces at sea within Somalia's territorial waters. EU NAVFOR ATALANTA continues to fulfil its missions, providing maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean in the rest of its area of operations. On a positive note and with the strong involvement of the EU, momentum was achieved in framing new AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), taking over from AMISOM on 1 April 2022. This will enable a phased transfer of security responsibilities to Somali Security Forces. With a view to foster the civilian-military synergies, EUCAP Somalia and EUTM Somalia are developing an options paper on enhanced cooperation that will contribute to the upcoming Holistic Strategic Review of the EU's CSDP missions the Horn of Africa.

In **Central Africa**, transition in **Chad** is lingering, while dialogue brokered by Qatar between the authorities and armed groups is delayed. The EU maintains a high level of vigilance in the **Central African Republic (CAR)**, where the presence of Wagner goes together with human rights abuses and constant disinformation campaigns against EU interests. CAR is one of the few countries where

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two CSDP Missions are deployed in parallel: The civilian CSDP Advisory Mission (EUAM RCA) provides strategic advice to the Ministry of Interior and Public Security and to the management of the Police and Gendarmerie since 2019. The Military Training and Advisory Mission (EUTM RCA) has been providing strategic advice, operational training and education to the CAR Armed Forces and the CAR Ministry of Defence since 2016. Due to the situation in CAR, the EU temporarily suspended training activities of EUTM RCA to the benefit of the CAR Armed Forces in November 2021. In March 2022, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted conclusions on **Cameroon**. With the lifting of Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, the EU gave a new impetus to its relations with **Burundi**. In **DRC**, despite the reform agenda of the President, insecurity and frustration is mounting in the East.

In **Western Africa**, the situation in **Mali** keeps on deteriorating, with increased presence and influence of Wagner, and more aggressive stance towards the EU and its Member States, leading to a redefinition of our presence on the ground. The Malian Transition is still under sanctions by ECOWAS. The situation in Mali has led the EU to temporarily suspend operational trainings provided by EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali to the armed forces and the national guard. A Strategic Review of our CSDP engagement in Mali and in the broader region is currently under discussion.

Following the coup in early 2022, **Burkina Faso** has joined Mali and **Guinea** on a path of a new political transition, with uncertainties around possible long-term outcomes, while the security situation keeps worsening. In this fragile context, a spill over to coastal countries of the Gulf of Guinea is a worrying perspective and deserves particular attention. The EU is looking at options to support relevant countries with an integrated approach. The EU launched the **Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP) concept in the Gulf of Guinea** in January 2021, and extended it in February 2022. The CMP in the Gulf of Guinea helps to address the security challenges affecting freedom of navigation; it contributed to reduce maritime security incidents by more than 50% in 2021; it is an effective tool ensuring a continued presence of EU Member States in the region; and increases cooperation and partnerships with the coastal States of the Gulf of Guinea and regional and maritime security organisations of the Yaoundé Architecture.

Asia-Pacific

Given the intensifying **geopolitical competition** in Asia and the Pacific, the EU **focused on greater presence and impact** in the region. It was a breakthrough year for the EU's Indo-Pacific policy: Council Conclusions on an **EU Strategy on Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific** were issued on 19 April, followed by the Joint Communication on 16 September, which outlined the implementation of the Strategy. With the adoption of its Indo-Pacific Strategy, the EU is sending a clear signal that it is stepping up its strategic engagement with the Indo-Pacific region, aiming at maintaining it free and open for all, while building lasting partnerships on matters ranging from prosperity, green transition, ocean governance or the digital agenda to security and defence.

The adoption of the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy had a positive impact on relations with like-minded partners. The Japanese Foreign Minister Montegi participated in the Foreign Affairs Council in January of 2022. **EU-Japan relations** under the Strategic Partnership Agreement were strengthened

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through the implementation of the new Green Alliance, as well as the launch of an EU-Japan Digital Partnership and the announcement of an Air Services Agreement at the EU-Japan Summit in May 2022 in Tokyo. Relations with the **Republic of Korea** were intense, with a virtual EU-Republic of Korea Leaders' meeting in the margins of the G7 Summit in early June of 2021.

The upward trend in **EU-Australia** cooperation continued, but was negatively impacted by the announcement, in September, of the AUKUS security arrangement and the related cancellation of a major defence contract with France. Free Trade Agreement negotiations continued with both Australia and **New Zealand**.

The EU strengthened its coherence and unity by accelerating the implementation of the 2019 “**EU-China: A Strategic Outlook**” Joint Communication. While engagement with China became increasingly difficult through the adoption of disproportionate Chinese counter-measures against EU sanctions as well as economic coercive measures affecting the EU Single Market, the EU managed this complex and challenging relationship with China in a realistic and multifaceted approach. The **EU-China virtual Summit** on 1 April 2022 confirmed this approach, while the discussions among leaders were heavily focused on the negative global repercussions of the **Russian war against Ukraine**. The dismantling of the “One Country Two Systems” in Hong Kong led to the implementation of a package of measures adopted by the Council in July 2020. The Hong Kong Annual report 2021 and the Macao Annual report 2021 were published on 20 May 2022. Throughout the past year, the EU deepened relations with **Taiwan**, while monitoring growing tensions in the Taiwan Straits. Furthermore, the partnership with Mongolia was strengthened through the establishment of an **EU-Mongolia** Political Directors Dialogue.

Afghanistan underwent a fundamental change last year, with the withdrawal of foreign troops and the take-over of Kabul by the Taliban on 15 August. The EU evacuated expatriate, as well as local employees and their families from Kabul airport in August. A **Safe Passage Task Force** was swiftly created and continued the operations to allow those who worked with the EU or who were at risk to leave Afghanistan thereafter. The **EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan** engaged in dialogue with the Taliban-appointed interim government around five benchmarks defined in the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of September. The Special Envoy consulted with likeminded and regional actors, through frequent travelling to the US, Qatar, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, Pakistan and India, to share analyses and harmonise messaging to the Taliban. The EEAS actively engaged with the Pakistani authorities via different established dialogues, where blasphemy, enforced disappearances, trade relations, sustainable development as well as the regional security issues and Afghanistan were discussed.

The EU also deepened and widened the Strategic Partnership with **India**, following the **EU-India Leaders' Meeting in 2021**, it was decided to resume negotiations for a free trade agreement and to launch negotiations on a stand-alone investment protection agreement and an agreement on geographical indications. The EU and India are also implementing the **Connectivity Partnership**. Meanwhile, the local EU-India Human Rights Dialogue was resumed in 2021 after an interval of several years. At the Diplomatic Consultations with **Bangladesh**, expansion of relations to a

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Climate Dialogue and a Dialogue on foreign and security policy cooperation confirmed the intensification of bilateral relations. The EEAS also continued, jointly with Directorate General for Trade and Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, to monitor respect of labour and wider human rights conditions linked to preferential trade schemes of which several partners in South Asia, notably Bangladesh and **Sri Lanka**, benefit.

In **Southeast Asia**, negotiations on Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with **Malaysia** and **Thailand** advanced, with a view to their signature in 2022. A profound and negative change took place in **Myanmar**, following the military coup in February 2021. Nevertheless, over the last year, the EEAS coordinated a swift and robust response, through sanctions, diplomatic and humanitarian efforts, and supporting ASEAN and the United Nations, including through the newly appointed **EU Special Envoy for Myanmar**. The Joint Working Group on Palm Oil between the EU and relevant ASEAN member countries met for the first time, online, on 27 January 2021.

In **the Pacific**, the EU sustained its political role through support to the **Bougainville Peace Process** in **Papua New Guinea**. The EU held Political Dialogues with **Vanuatu** and **Samoa**. A High-Level Event on Climate Change took place in October with the participation of European Commission Executive Vice President Timmermans and leaders from the region.

The EU continued to work intensively to bring Europe and Asia closer together. The **13th ASEM Summit** took place virtually on 25-26 November from Phnom Penh, under the title '*Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth*' and with three outcome documents on post Covid recovery, multilateralism and connectivity. 45 Heads of State and Government attended, making it one of the most important multilateral meetings in the world in the autumn of 2021.

The EEAS made full use of technological possibilities to represent the EU in the complete annual cycle of activities with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) and the ASEAN Regional Forum, as well as to ensure continued bilateral engagements. HR/VP Borrell made his first visit to **Indonesia** and the ASEAN headquarters, advancing the **EU-ASEAN Strategic Partnership**, promoting the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy, and announcing the conclusion of negotiations on an EU-ASEAN Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement, as well as the agreement to hold the EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit in Brussels in 2022.

Pursuing EU priorities and interests in the Asia-Pacific in the context of the **2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework**, the EEAS contributed to the complex programming of assistance, both bilateral and regional, which over the period to 2027 will reinforce the relations with Asia and the Pacific, with a particular focus on green and digital transition, as well as connectivity, under the new **Global Gateway Strategy**.

On 21 February 2022, the EU launched the **Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) in the North Western Indian Ocean**, establishing a Maritime Area of Interest in the region. With the CMP concept in the North Western Indian Ocean, the EU will reinforce the EU's strategic focus and actions in the region; ensure a European naval presence in the Indo-Pacific; strengthen partnership

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and cooperation in the region including with the maritime industry; and enhance the EU's role as a global maritime security provider.

Americas

The EU and transatlantic partners have led the international response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, closely coordinating on far-reaching sanctions against Russia (and Belarus), isolating Russia in international fora and providing comprehensive military, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine. US President Biden participated in the European Council in March 2022 to coordinate the response against the war. Both the US Secretary of State and the Canadian Foreign Minister exchanged views with EU Foreign Ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council on various occasions in the first semester of 2022, adding to frequent contacts and visits across both sides of the Atlantic to address Russia's military aggression and its wider impact. Latin American and Caribbean countries demonstrated their like-mindedness by giving overwhelming support to the UNGA resolutions on aggression against Ukraine and on its humanitarian consequences.

The successful launch of the first-ever bilateral **Security and Defence Dialogue with the US** represented a significant milestone in advancing EU-US cooperation in this field. The presence (since 2020) of a military advisor to EUDEL Washington DC, with accreditation for Canada, continued to help promote EU security and defence policy.

At the EU-US Summit on 15 June, leaders set out a "Joint Transatlantic Agenda for the post-pandemic era", marking a new chapter in transatlantic relations. The Summit launched a number of flagship initiatives, notably the setting up of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council, with ministerial meetings taking place in Pittsburgh (September 2021) and Saclay, France (May 2022), high-level exchanges on Russia, Indo-Pacific and security and defence, and the re-launch of the EU-US dialogue on China. In March 2022, the HR/VP travelled to Washington, together with Commissioner Simson, to co-chair the EU-US Energy Council, which included discussions on European energy security and accelerating the transition to renewable energies.

At the **EU-Canada Summit** held on 14 June 2021, leaders agreed on an ambitious agenda for EU-Canada cooperation and launched a number of initiatives including an EU-Canada Dialogue on Health, the organisation of an Ocean Partnership Forum, the establishment of a Strategic Partnership on Critical Raw Materials and Minerals, as well as the participation of Canada in a PESCO project on military mobility. In May 2022, the HR/VP and Canadian Foreign Minister co-chaired the Joint Ministerial Committee in Brussels, with the participation of EU Foreign Ministers.

At the Foreign Affairs Council on 21 June 2021, the HR/VP called urgent attention to **Latin America and the Caribbean**, as the Covid pandemic continued to rage throughout 2021, affecting the region more severely than any other. The EEAS supported EU coordination of the export and donation of 125 million doses of Covid vaccines, as well as humanitarian aid. The President of the European Council Michel was the only extra-regional leader to participate in the CELAC Summit in Mexico in September, a signal underlining the EU's interest in the region. In October, HR/VP

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congratulated the EU-LAC Foundation on its 10th anniversary which it celebrated at the first meeting to take place at its headquarters in Hamburg. On 2 December 2021, an EU-LAC Leaders' Meeting took place online, with the participation of the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission, and the HR/VP as well the Heads of State/Government of the 2021 presidencies of the main regional organisations in LAC. The discussion confirmed a common agenda focused on a sustainable, digital and inclusive recovery from the pandemic, as set out at the informal Berlin Ministerial meeting of December 2020. The implementation of these priorities will be supported by the LAC regional and country multiannual indicative programmes approved in December 2021.

The HR/VP's mission to **Panama** in May 2022 was an occasion to tighten bilateral relations and to renew the EU's commitment to relations with the Central American Integration System (SICA) and with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), as well as to reaffirm the importance of the rules-based international system and multilateralism. The EU continued to work for the advancement of democracy, human rights and rule of law in the region. In January 2022, a third set of restrictive measures was imposed on **Nicaragua**. The EU maintained an intense dialogue at all levels with notably **Cuba** and **Guatemala**; sent an Electoral Observation Mission to **Honduras** and an Electoral Expert Mission to **El Salvador**. The EU continued work with its international partners to improve the humanitarian and security situation in **Haiti**.

Frequent contacts with **Mexico** continued throughout 2022, both within in the framework of the Strategic Partnership and in more informal settings.

In relation to **South America**, the EU consolidated and expanded the partnerships with several countries in the region. The technical negotiations for the modernisation of the Association Agreement with **Chile** were concluded in 2021 and work towards the conclusion and signature of the **EU-Mercosur** Association Agreement continued throughout 2021 and 2022. In September, the HR/VP and the Vice-President/Foreign Minister of Colombia signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Colombia reinforcing and enlarging the political and sectorial dialogue and cooperation to new areas, notably environment and sustainable development, while continuing support to the implementation of the peace process. The negotiations of a Memorandum of Understanding with Peru were concluded in 2021.

In November 2021, the HR/VP, visited Brazil and Peru in order to give a new impetus to the EU's engagement with the region. In **Peru**, which was most affected by Covid in terms of deaths (as a percentage of the population), the HR/VP showed the EU's full support to the country. In **Brazil**, the visit demonstrated the EU's commitment to this key strategic partner, including a critical engagement on environmental issues. In April 2022, the HR/VP was the first foreign dignitary to visit **Chile** since President Boric's inauguration. This visit ensured close relations with the new Chilean administration, encouraged the conclusions of the modernisation of the 2002 Association Agreement and positioned the EU as a key partner in strengthening multilateralism and regional integration, fighting climate change, advancing the digitalization of our economies, and promoting sustainable and inclusive trade.

The EU stepped-up its engagement in **Venezuela** by deploying an EU Electoral Observation Mission to the regional and local elections held in November 2021. The EU has also continued its diplomatic role on the crisis, including through the International Contact Group, maintaining a diplomatic presence and dialogue with all parties in Venezuela, supporting meaningful, pragmatic and inclusive negotiations in the context of Mexico talks with a view to a democratic transition. The HR/VP personally engaged in exchanges with both the regime and the opposition, in an effort to identify collectively agreed solutions. Support to the promotion of reconciliation in **Bolivia** continued over the last year, while in Chile, the EU engaged in accompanying and supporting constitutional reform.

EU Special Representatives (EUSRs)

Currently, nine Special Representatives provide the EU with an active political presence in key areas: four EUSRs in the European neighbourhood (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Dialogue and Western Balkans regional issues, South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia), two on the African continent (Sahel, Horn of Africa), two in Asia and the Middle East (Central Asia, Middle East Peace Process), as well as one EUSR with a thematic mandate (Human Rights). As part of the comprehensive review of the use and scope of EUSRs, over the past two years, the EEAS in close coordination with the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), has taken numerous steps to strengthen the general handling of the EUSR instrument in the context of an effective and cost-efficient CFSP. Before proposing a new EUSR, the High Representative examined whether existing EEAS structures, including EU Delegations, could achieve the desired objectives. In this context, the opening of new EU Delegations, and appointment Special Envoys, such as the ones for the Indo-Pacific and for Myanmar have been taken forward. Mandate lengths for EUSRs have been aligned. The EEAS and FPI will continue to take steps to ensure that EUSRs continue to deliver on EU policy objectives in an effective manner.

(2) GLOBAL ISSUES

With the objective to enhance the role of the EU as a global player and to **support rules-based multilateralism**, the Commission and the HR/VP adopted in February 2021, a Joint Communication and an action plan, inspired by 75 years of the UN. The overall **EU-UN partnership** was reinforced by the visit of UN Secretary General Guterres to Brussels in June and Strategic Dialogues held notably with OHCHR, UNHCR, FAO, WFP, ICRC and IFRC. In parallel, the EEAS widened its range of consultations on UN affairs with third countries, including with the U.S., Japan, and New Zealand.

In a context marked by ongoing democratic erosion across the world, the EU upheld its longstanding commitment to **election observation** activities as an effective tool to support rule of law, democratic processes and respect for human rights. The EU deployed Electoral Observation Missions to Zambia, Kosovo, Iraq, Venezuela, Honduras, The Gambia, Timor Leste, Colombia and Lebanon. In this great diversity of contexts, some of which presenting challenging security or

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political circumstances, the successful deployment of these Missions illustrated the unabated determination of the EU to contribute to strengthening democratic institutions and building public confidence in electoral processes, in cooperation with the authorities, institutions and civil society of partner countries.

The EEAS continued to put **human rights** at the centre of EU foreign policy during a year marked by the Covid pandemic and a further backsliding of democracy and human rights. The EU engaged in a number of human rights dialogues and consultations, including a first human rights dialogue with Saudi Arabia in September and a first Strategic Dialogue with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the EUSR for Human Rights in October. At the Summit for Democracy, President von der Leyen announced the launch of the €1.5 billion Global Europe Thematic programme on Human Rights and Democracy for 2021-2027. The annual EU-NGO Forum in December took stock of the pandemic's impact on fundamental freedoms, economic, social and cultural rights and health equity. The new EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime was moved swiftly into action with three subsequent listings adopted so far. A special programme to support Afghans' participation in the Global Campus on Human Rights was launched. In UN human rights fora, notably the Human Rights Council in Geneva, successful initiatives included the EU-led resolution on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, the Special Sessions on Afghanistan and the resolution creating the mandate of a Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan. In the wake of the Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU brought forward, together with Ukraine and likeminded countries, a resolution adopted in an Urgent Debate on the situation of human rights in Ukraine, which created an independent Commission of Inquiry. The EEAS also coordinated a wide outreach in support of the UNGA's vote to suspend Russia's membership of the Human Rights Council, which resulted in the subsequent election of the Czech Republic to replace Russia. In May, the EU joined Ukraine and likeminded countries in convening a Special Session of the Human Rights Council, which strongly condemned the grave violation of human rights and humanitarian law in Ukraine.

Since the beginning of the invasion, the EEAS promoted initiatives aimed at ensuring **accountability for international crimes** committed in the context of Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine. In particular, it provided support to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and to the investigations of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, notably through the EU Delegation to Ukraine and the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine. The EEAS also worked on the mapping of international efforts in support of accountability, in view of furthering global coordination.

In the context of the pandemic, the EEAS continued to foster safe international travel to the EU and within for third-country travellers, with the successful roll-out as of 1 July 2021 of the EU Digital Covid Certificate (EUDCC), linking with 40 countries outside the EU. With the objective to **strengthen the WHO and the global health system**, the EU promoted the launch of negotiations on an international treaty on pandemic preparedness and response. The EEAS Task Force on Vaccine Strategy coordinated efforts towards a global response to the Covid pandemic through vaccines sharing.

On **economic issues**, the EEAS contributed to developing more responsible supply chains in Covid-times, on human rights and labour rights while strengthening cooperation with the G20, notably on debt relief measures to low-income countries, and with international financial institutions, such as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The EEAS supported the external dimension of the EU Anti Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism financing policies, ensuring political and diplomatic support for their implementation.

Following the Foreign Affairs Council debate on ‘Geopolitics of new technologies’ held in July 2021, the EEAS mobilised its **Digital Diplomacy** Task Force and the network of EU Digital Ambassadors in order to prepare an external digital policy in 2022, while supporting EU priorities in international initiatives such as the Declaration for the Future of the Internet, Christchurch Call and Paris Peace Forum. Having concluded an EU-India Connectivity Partnership in May 2021 and adopted FAC Conclusions “Globally Connected Europe” in July 2021, the EU announced its new flagship foreign policy investment tool, “Global Gateway” in a Joint Communication adopted in December 2021. This initiative, targeting up to €300 billion of investment in sustainable infrastructure globally, serves as the basis for the definition of the Global Gateway Investment Package for Africa, announced in February 2022.

The EEAS significantly intensified its work on the **external dimension of the Green Deal** and its diplomatic engagement in view of the successful outcome of the Glasgow Climate Conference in November 2021 and the first part of the Biodiversity COP15 in October 2021. Throughout the period, the EEAS led numerous outreach actions vis à vis partner countries, including big emitters, in order to accelerate international efforts towards the global energy transition (Council conclusions of February 2022 on EU climate diplomacy “Accelerating the implementation of Glasgow outcomes”). Specific outreach and actions focused on countering deforestation (Regulation to counter deforestation adopted on 17 November), promoting biodiversity, circular economy, as well as water (Council conclusions on Water at FAC Development on 18 November 2021) and protecting the oceans, with the launch of the international negotiations for a global agreement on plastics at the UN Environment Assembly in February 2022. The joint EU-US initiative on the Global Methane Pledge was launched at COP26 with more than 100 countries. Built on several demarches and intensive joint EU-US outreach, it showcases an exemplary transatlantic cooperation and consolidates the EU leading role on climate action. The Just Transition Partnership with South Africa (November 2021) was also a major breakthrough initiative for committing South Africa to a green just transition.

The EEAS continued to address the **external aspects of migration** as an integral part of the EU’s foreign policy and dialogue with partner countries and regions around the world. Comprehensive, mutually beneficial and tailor-made partnerships with countries of origin, transit and destination at bilateral and regional level were promoted. Following the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the EEAS actively engaged in promoting solidarity for the persons fleeing the conflict with major external partners, as well as addressing the situation of third-country nationals stranded in Ukraine.

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In the overall context of crisis situations, the EEAS also acted on the phenomenon of instrumentalisation of migrants through active diplomatic engagement. The EEAS focused on contributing to the formulation, concrete operationalisation and development of actions and funding under the external dimension of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, notably on legal migration as part of the Skills and Talents package proposed by the Commission in April 2022.

Gender Equality and Diversity

In big parts of the world, the expectations on the EU's political and diplomatic leadership remain very high. This translates into actions based upon the EU's political objective to safeguard and promote gender equality and diversity within and beyond the EU. This has been done in the course of the year by mainstreaming gender and diversity in our policies, as well as in our bilateral external actions, or in multilateral and regional fora.

Throughout the year, the EU showed commitment to integrating the gender perspective and ensuring women's participation and leadership in all peace and security-related contexts, such as in peace processes, in mediation, but also in the protection of women's rights as well as of women promoting gender equality and diversity such as women's human rights defenders and women peacebuilders, state building and reconstruction. Promotion of dialogue and calls to involve women and youth were a consistent part of the EU's engagement.

During the reporting period, the process of designing Country Level Implementation Plans (CLIPs) for the Joint Communication on "An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action (GAP III) (2021-2025)" fostered a more strategic approach, based on consultations with partners in country, including with civil society and women's rights organisations, leading to a political and operational roadmap for implementation.

As a result, a substantive number of EU Delegations equipped themselves with an up-to-date gender analysis at country level, to contribute to a gender-responsive diplomacy and programme design and put measures in place to ensure the use of sex-disaggregated data.

Furthermore, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) and the EU Military Staff developed a tailor-made GAP III monitoring framework for CSDP missions and operations. Additionally, in Civilian CSDP missions, Gender Advisors and experts participated in a 35-hour online on-the-job training course and a pilot online training course for Gender Focal Points (GFPs) was delivered to participants from ten different Missions. This pilot is now turned into a standardized training which will be delivered to all GFPs starting in 2022. Steps have also been taken in 2021 to strengthen the national contributions to civilian CSDP missions through a strategy to enhance women participation in civilian missions.

Work started to effectively introduce Gender-Responsive Leadership for all EEAS senior leadership and management as well as in the Delegations. Through outreach with various associations and interest groups, a beginning was made with an EEAS strategic approach to diversity, with the aim of resulting into an Action Plan in 2022.

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One periodic meeting of the EU Task Force on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) focussed on the situation of Afghan women, resulting in the initiative to set up a Forum for Afghan Women Leaders that has already met three times (March, April and May 2022) and in December 2021 the EEAS Secretary General decided to established a Forum for Afghan Women Leaders to ensure the contribution from Afghan women to the political dialogue about the future of Afghanistan. During March-April several session in the EU Task Force on WPS have focused on, and included, Ukrainian women and the mandate of EUAM Ukraine have been updated to also include the investigations and capacity regarding conflict-related sexual violence.

Enhanced efforts aimed at gender mainstreaming are underway, for example, engaging actively with the EU Presidency and the Member States to make sure gender equality and the WPS agenda become integrated in the political discussions (eg. in PSC, Coreper), rather than remaining a stand-alone item. This also ensures that gender equality and diversity are systematically included in the in EU political dialogues and diplomacy.

Strategic Communications

Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) – also often labelled as “disinformation” – remains a growing political and security challenge for the EU. FIMI has the potential to undermine democratic processes and institutions in third countries and can even be used as a tool in an insurgency or armed conflict, as is currently being demonstrated most vividly in the war Russia is waging in Ukraine. However, while this is the most concerning example of the harm that FIMI can do at the moment, it is also used by other actors such as China and in other regions across the globe, such as sub-Saharan Africa. Strengthening and further enhancing effective and sound responses to FIMI is a policy priority for the EU, since such activity impacts the EU’s ability to implement its policies at home and abroad and puts people’s lives at risk. Whether it be the Covid pandemic or Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, FIMI presents a dual challenge: *internal* in the sense of protecting the EU’s and its Member States’ democratic processes and security and *external* about working with like-minded partner countries to either support them in their work against FIMI or in working together to address an issue that goes beyond national borders, particularly in conflict-prone areas.

In its response, the EEAS has significantly invested in strengthening situational awareness as well as building resilience and capacities in the EU and beyond. In order to safeguard the EU’s ability to conduct and implement its CFSP in the Neighbourhood, the network of 27 regional STRATCOM Officers adequately reinforced the work of the EU delegations and of the dedicated EEAS STRATCOM Taskforces, in their regional endeavours to expose FIMI activities as well as of Covid- related disinformation. Their initiatives and efforts aimed at raising awareness on interference actions conducted by the Kremlin and manipulative behaviour of other state/non-state actors in the much broader context, going beyond the Covid pandemic and looking into FIMI narratives on issues as varied as local elections, migration and refugees policies and freedom of speech.

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Furthermore, EEAS continued to expose, debunk and raise awareness of **Russia's information manipulation and interference** and Kremlin's **disinformation "ecosystems"** via the public "EUvsDisinfo" platform supported also on social media channels. During the last year, specific campaigns focused on responding to FIMI targeting Ukraine and the Covid pandemic. The Kremlin has used FIMI to bolster its energy policy by exploiting the problem of Europe's gas supply, or to spread Covid-related disinformation in favour of their Sputnik-V vaccine. "EUvsDisinfo" content is available in English, Russian and Ukrainian; part of the content is translated into a few other EU and EaP languages (Spanish, French, Italian, German, and Romanian); individual articles have been also translated into Chinese.

Under the broad CFSP/CSDP dimension, our focus on FIMI activities has been constantly calibrated on the Russian and Chinese actions, as well as other actors in our Neighbourhood and on the African continent, closely linked to our CSDP deployments.

In order to help manage the migratory tensions in **Belarus** in autumn 2021, the EEAS drafted a short-term communication strategy, produced and distributed social media videos, secured partnerships for campaign distribution, and produced tailored monitoring and analysis reports to inform EU policy and communication responses. In addition, analytical reports on the Lukashenko regime's FIMI activities levied against the EU and Member States helped identify and track new trends as well as monitor the engagement of Russia and other actors. The EEAS worked with the Ukraine Support Group (SGUA) and the EU Delegation in Kyiv to design the programmes "EU4ResilientRegions" and "Media4Democracy" with a goal to strengthen independent media outlets, journalists, bloggers, opinion makers and organised civil society in Ukraine, as well as across the Eastern Partnership region.

In the **Western Balkans**, as part of a series of activities to increase capacity building of local actors and public awareness to FIMI and disinformation, the EEAS Stratcom gathered fact-checkers, youth, journalists, high-level officials and authorities from the region for the 2021 EU-Western Balkans Media Literacy Conference. The commitment for the future of the region was reconfirmed once again through engagements and support to the EU communication strategy for the **EU-Western Balkans Summit** and the facilitation and organisation of a set of civic and public activities in the region as part of the **Conference on the Future of Europe**.

The launching of the Regional Media Officer position in the **MENA region** marked a hallmark decision. The Regional Media Officer, based in the EU Delegation to Lebanon, has a mandate to engage on all regional topics and support delegations to communicate more extensively in Arabic. The Regional Media Officer became a well-known media figure on pan-regional news channels and engages with Arabic-speaking audiences through his highly successful Twitter account @EUinArabic. Furthermore, the Regional Media Officer succeeded in addressing FIMI narratives directly, well positioning the EU to engage with independent media and civil society to support freedom of expression.

In order to keep up with the constantly emerging threats to the EU's foreign policy priorities and following-up on the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, efforts have been stepped up to

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reinforce CSDP Missions and Operations with better situational awareness and capacity building elements for an adequate response to information manipulation and disinformation.

In the same manner, building on the previous achievements under the European Democracy Action Plan (2020), the EEAS Stratcom Division advanced its work on the development of policies, strategies and appropriate instruments to respond to FIMI. In light of the evolving threat, the EEAS worked to more adequately describe the threat, to capture the manipulative behaviour of different actors in the information environment.

In close cooperation with the European Commission, the EEAS has been leading the efforts for the development of a four dimensional FIMI toolbox : (a) situational awareness; (b) resilience building; (c) disruption and regulatory approaches; and (d) diplomatic responses / responses of the CFSP realm. A first concept note on the development of the Toolbox was shared with Member States, in order to establish a basis for a common methodology, establish a comprehensive, sustainable and effective framework against FIMI and, in the long run, to **impose costs on actors of FIMI**. Furthermore, building on the experiences of the cyber-security community, the EEAS has been working to establish data-sharing standards and analysis practices for FIMI incidents by bringing stakeholders together to ultimately create a dedicated Data Space.

In the international and multilateral dimension, EEAS has stepped up its exchanges with **international partners**, leveraging the existing strong networks and relationships it has built over the past years. The EEAS worked closely with the Member States as well as international partners (in particular the G7 and NATO), and the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism has continued to be one of the key fora to exchange on the challenge of FIMI with international partners; The EEAS has likewise continued to step up cooperation with the civil society and private industry to promote a whole-of-society approach. The **Rapid Alert System (RAS)** remained the nexus of the valuable network of stakeholders engaged in countering disinformation. The RAS' community of experts from across the EU continued to share information and analysis on a daily basis and allowed, in specific settings, valuable exchanges with G7 members and NATO.

(3) COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY AND CRISIS RESPONSE

In the CSDP domain, work continued towards strengthening the EU's capacity to respond to security challenges and to be better equipped to consolidate its role of a global player and a security provider.

In March 2022, EU Member States adopted the **Strategic Compass**, which will guide the EU's actions in security and defence for the next 5-10 years. The EU and its Member States continue to face multiple threats and challenges that are rapidly evolving and increasing in both magnitude and complexity. In addition, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought back war to the European continent, thereby fundamentally shifting the security environment in the EU's neighbourhood and beyond. In this context, it is all the more important that the EU is able to act quickly and assertively, when its own security and its core interests are at stake. Building on a comprehensive shared threat analysis, the Strategic Compass makes concrete and actionable proposals with clear timelines for

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implementation to (1) act more quickly and assertively, (2) to secure access to strategic domains and protect its citizens and institutions against hybrid threats, cyber-attacks and foreign information manipulation, (3) to invest in security and defence and in particular in civilian and military capabilities and technologies, and (4) to strengthen and deepen cooperation with partners, including individual countries and international organisations such as NATO, the UN, and the OSCE.

Following the adoption in March 2021 of the Council Decision creating the **European Peace Facility**, the first assistance measures were launched by the end of 2021, targeting Africa and Eastern Europe as priority regions. The strategic orientations adopted by EU Member States in early 2022 allowed for a balanced approach between East and South. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine led to an immediate reaction from EU Member States and an unprecedented support to Ukraine through the EPF, amounting to EUR 2 billion by the end of May 2022.

Regarding the **Permanent Structured Cooperation** (PESCO), 2021 has seen the adoption of several legal texts building on the previous work and making best use of the PESCO Strategic Review of 2020. 14 additional PESCO projects were launched last November (with a focus in the air and space domains), bringing the total to 60. About a third of these 60 projects are meant to deliver results by 2025. Some projects are already delivering now, such as the European Medical Command, and the Cyber Rapid Response Teams. The signature of the Administrative Arrangement on the participation of Canada, Norway and the US in the PESCO project on Military Mobility was finalised in December.

The EU continued to take a leading role in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention and the strengthening of international security. As of today, there are **18 ongoing CSDP missions and operations**, 11 of which are civilian, and 7 military.

Last year was an important year for the implementation of the **Civilian CSDP Compact**. All EU Member States continued to implement national implementation plans (NIPs) aiming to increase their contributions to civilian CSDP missions. Six Member States-led NIP clusters have been launched to exchange best practices and lessons learnt on national processes, and the EEAS has proposed means to facilitate the secondment of national experts to civilian missions. A number of important policy developments have also taken place, including on CSDP-JHA cooperation: the EEAS has developed so called mini-concepts to allow civilian CSDP missions to better address non-traditional security challenges; and the ongoing negotiations on working arrangements between Frontex and some of the civilian CSDP missions are also an important step. Civilian CSDP is now better coordinated with other EU actors, but also with partners like the UN, in headquarters and on the ground. Progress has also been achieved regarding civilian-military coordination and cooperation.

The **cyber** threat landscape has further evolved in 2021. The EEAS, together with the Commission, has continued the implementation of the 2020 Joint Cybersecurity Strategy to increase resilience and show leadership in cyberspace; build capacities to prevent, deter and respond to cyber-attacks; and strengthen partnerships in favour of a global and open cyberspace. While some authoritarian states continue to push for enhanced government control over cyberspace, the outcome reports

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adopted in 2021 by the UN Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) and the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on advancing responsible state behaviour in cyberspace present an important opportunity for international peace and stability. The EU's pro-active role in defence of the international rules-based order in cyberspace is very important. For example, the EU, together with 59 countries, proposed to establish a Programme of Action to Advance Responsible State Behaviour in cyberspace that should facilitate the implementation of the UN framework for responsible state behaviour. Civilian CSDP missions reinforced their cybersecurity capacities and their focus on handling foreign information manipulation and interference.

The EEAS contributed to the development of the Security Union Strategy in 2020 and continues to work towards its full implementation, including as regards the **hybrid-related initiatives** with the objective to make the EU detect, prevent and respond better to hybrid threats.

The EU continued to engage with numerous **partners** worldwide on a wide range of security and defence issues. Cooperation was consolidated with the UN, including with the adoption of a new set of joint priorities until 2024. It reached an unprecedented level with NATO, in the implementation of the common set of proposals and in particular in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine. A dedicated EU-US dialogue on security and defence was successfully launched. Cooperation further developed with the African Union, ASEAN, Canada, Norway, as well as with other partners in the European neighbourhood, Indo-Pacific, Africa, and Latin America. The EEAS continued to engage with third states regarding participation in CSDP missions and operations.

The EU has sought to reinforce its role in **countering terrorism** (CT) and preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE), both as a donor of capacity-building projects around the world and as a norm setter, promoting a rights-based and whole-of-society approach to CT-P/CVE within the multilateral structures. The EU has been working closely with third countries and international organisations, including through dedicated Counter Terrorism Dialogues and cooperation on the ground, facilitated also through its Network of Counterterrorism/Security Experts deployed in 20 EU Delegations. The EU was successful in its bid to co-chair the GCTF and will assume this role in September 2022. The EU also continued to actively participate in meetings of the Global Coalition against Da'esh, sharing its experience and coordinating on stabilisation efforts.

The EEAS continued to be very active on **Non-Proliferation, Disarmament and Arms Export Control**. In November 2021, the Council adopted conclusions on the 10th Review Conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as on the sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons. In March 2022, the Council adopted Council Conclusions in view of the ninth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. During the course of 2021, eight new CFSP Council Decisions were adopted on projects in support of EU objectives in the area of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms exports control, with a total budget of EUR 22,3 million.

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The Commission and the High Representative adopted the Joint Communication on **Space Traffic Management** (STM) in February 2022. It addresses the risk that the increasing number of satellites and debris in the Earth's orbit pose on the safety and resilience of EU space infrastructure.

The concept for an **Integrated Approach on Climate Change and Security** was published in September 2021, establishing a framework to integrate the climate and security dimension in all relevant policies and instruments of the EU peace and security work.

The adoption of a Joint Communication in December 2021 on an **EU strategic approach in support of Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration of former combatants (DDR)**, endorsed in May 2022 through dedicated Council Conclusions, frames the EU's DDR engagements within the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises, and ensures compatibility with the UN approach to DDR.

The EEAS has continued fostering coordinated **EU consular crisis preparedness and response**, in particular to address the consular crises in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Ukraine. This helped facilitate consular protection and, where applicable, the repatriations of EU citizens. Such EU consular coordination relied on strengthened support to EU Delegations, as well as active EEAS cooperation with EU Member States and like-minded partners.

(4) PRIORITIES FOR 2022

Adapting to the increasingly confrontational world order will continue to dominate the EU's foreign policy priorities in 2022. Many of the trends that are now accelerated by Russia's aggression against Ukraine – the rapid erosion of rules-based multilateralism, de-globalisation and the disruption of supply chains, the weaponisation of interdependence, to name but a few – had already appeared before the invasion of Ukraine and some were reinforced by the Covid pandemic. The EU has therefore started to rethink its global role some time ago and taken concrete steps towards becoming a more multifaceted strategic actor – which now places us in a good position to counter the pressing challenges we face today.

Most importantly, the war further underlines the necessity for the EU to continue pursuing its two-track approach in its external relations – **(1) strengthening our strategic autonomy** while **(2) remaining a global champion for multilateralism**. The past few months have clearly demonstrated that we need to reduce our vulnerabilities in critical sectors if we are to become a more effective geopolitical actor on the global stage. This also includes using our very considerable assets more resolutely: in a world in which raw power is becoming the main currency, we must be prepared to take a more 'hard-nosed' approach in advancing our interests and values.

In our pursuit of strategic autonomy, however, we must equally preserve openness and cooperation. Fostering **mutually beneficial partnerships** with countries around the world will be crucial for our efforts to safeguard rules-based multilateralism and global accountability. Cooperation and respect for the principles enshrined in the UN Charter are the only way to escape the 'law of the jungle' and

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to tackle the enormous challenges to peace and stability that we are collectively confronted with. Strategic autonomy and multilateralism are thus not contradictory but mutually reinforce each other.

Against this backdrop, the **transatlantic partnership** remains a key pillar not only of Euro-Atlantic security but of rules-based multilateralism in general. We will continue to ensure a united and closely coordinated response with transatlantic partners to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including support to the future re-construction of the country while also addressing the wider geopolitical implications in terms of food and energy security and financial stability. We will also work to put into practice the commitments from the 2021 Summits with the US and Canada, building on the significant progress made during the last year, ensuring that the established dialogues and mechanisms bring tangible outcomes and well-coordinated transatlantic action on key foreign policy and security and defence issues, including on the EU-NATO partnership. High-level engagement and visits across both sides of the Atlantic will continue unabated.

In building partnerships, our immediate neighbourhood will remain a top priority. We need to deliver on the EU perspective of the **Western Balkans** based on implementation of the required reforms. This should include opening accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia as soon as possible; continuing the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia; supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina to de-escalate its internal crisis, advance political reforms, and address the functionality of its institutions; and further developing cooperation on CFSP/CSDP issues with the countries of the region. We will likewise continue working on further consolidating the de-escalation in the **Eastern Mediterranean**.

Our **Eastern neighbourhood** is the region most immediately exposed to Russian aggression and will likewise remain a major focus of our work. We will follow up on the Eastern Partnership Summit outcomes and propose to adapt the Partnership to the new challenges, with a focus on enhancing our partners' resilience and helping them strengthen their own security. In addition to our unwavering and massive support to Ukraine in facing the Russian aggression, we will remain committed to facilitating the efforts of conflict resolution and peace building in the Eastern neighbourhood. We will also continue to support the right of the Belarusian people to choose their own future and their democratic aspirations.

We will continue to work with our international partners to isolate **Russia**, strengthen accountability and uphold the principles of the rules-based international order. The EU's support to Russian civil society organisations, human rights defenders and independent media outlets and individual journalists in and outside Russia will remain key. It will also be paramount to keep in touch with those in Russia who share our values and to sustain people-to-people contacts as much as possible.

Central Asian states can count on our support when it comes to their efforts at preserving their independence and sovereignty as well as progress on regional cooperation. The EU will aim to sign the EPCA with Kyrgyzstan, wrap up EPCA negotiations with Uzbekistan and launch the negotiation of an EPCA with Tajikistan.

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In all our efforts at building meaningful partnerships, we shall coordinate ourselves closely with the **non-EU Western European countries** on issues of mutual interest, including on EU defence initiatives, CSDP missions and operations, as well as on sanctions. This includes our ‘newest neighbour’, the UK – while we still lack any structured cooperation on security and defence, practical exchange has been on an upward trajectory. Together with like-minded partners, the EU will also work to maintain and, where possible, enhance **Arctic cooperation** via suitable bodies and channels.

Looking south, the **Middle East and North Africa** are already beginning to feel the painful impact of Russia’s war against Ukraine. Its ramifications risk translating into a further deterioration of the already precarious situation of the region, especially regarding heightening food insecurity, energy prices, pressure on financial markets, migration, and political stability in some countries. Apart from helping countries in the region mitigate these existential issues, building a comprehensive regional EU policy, fully integrating the EU’s global priorities, notably the green deal/transition, the Global Gateway and the Strategic Compass/CSDP, will be a priority for the EU. We shall also strive to reinforce our role in addressing ongoing crises and conflicts and contribute to stabilisation processes in the region, using the full range of EU tools – from diplomatic over economic, development and humanitarian approaches up to civilian and military crisis management. Another key emphasis of our work will lie in deepening our partnership with the **Gulf States**, in line with the Joint Communication adopted on 18 May 2022.

The **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)** will remain at the top of our agenda. The key focus will remain on successfully concluding the Vienna talks and on supporting non-proliferation of nuclear arms and international peace and security while advancing multilateral solutions to international challenges and contributing to regional cooperation in the Gulf.

The **African continent** is likely to feature among the world’s regions most severely hit by both the short- and the mid-term impact of Russia’s war. Its fallouts will exacerbate various pre-existing crises against the backdrop of the Covid pandemic. Soaring food and energy prices will increase economic and social fragilities and worsen ongoing humanitarian crises in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, where fragile political transitions could face mounting local dissatisfaction. In addition to the joint commitments made during the EU-AU Summit, the EU needs to support its African partners confronted with pressing needs in the food and energy sectors. Beyond short-term interventions, we also need to develop long-term innovative partnerships on energy transition and strengthened agricultural value chains. Designing an integrated approach to the security crises in West Africa and the Great Lakes will be another key priority.

In an age of increasing instability and geopolitical competition, the **Indo-Pacific region** is of key strategic importance for the EU. In 2022, we will kick-start the implementation of both our Indo-Pacific Strategy and the Global Gateway to show that the EU is serious with what it has proposed. We will also build new digital partnerships with key partners in the region (Japan, Republic of Korea, and Singapore) and contribute to the stabilisation of the volatile security environment in Asia, with particular attention on security of global supply chains (e.g. semiconductors).

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Afghanistan and Myanmar will remain at the centre of our humanitarian efforts in the region. Finally, following up to COP26 is a key concern in the entire region, and we will enhance our partnerships with countries keen on stepping up cooperation on topics such as deforestation and phasing out or down of coal.

All the while, the EU should attempt to maintain a functional and pragmatic way of working with **China**. The country remains a cooperation partner, an economic competitor and a systemic rival. In navigating this complex relationship, we will stand firm on principles, values and interests, working from positions of unity to be able to pursue cooperation and competition.

In the year to come, the EU will re-double its efforts to strengthen its strategic partnership with **Latin America and the Caribbean**. A Roadmap is under preparation, setting out the path for a qualitative leap in our relations with the region through more high-level political dialogue and visits and the completion of the network of trade and association agreements. The EU will continue to strengthen political alliances in priority areas, e.g. through the Digital Alliance. The EU will actively support the implementation of the peace process in Colombia, the constitutional process in Chile, as well as efforts to bring a peaceful and democratic solution to the crisis in Venezuela, while addressing the humanitarian fall-out and the migration crisis. The EU will continue to strengthen its partnership with SICA and CARIFORUM and with the two strategic partners, Brazil and Mexico, as well as Argentina as a G-20 country, which is all the more important in the current geopolitical context.

In line with our two-track approach to our external action, we likewise need to take decisive steps on the **multilateral level** to counteract the heightened risks of disruption and dysfunctionality Russia's aggression has caused. While monitoring and assessing its impact, the EU has been increasing cooperation with the UN and other key international organisations to uphold the UN Charter, international law, international humanitarian law and human rights, as well as to assess the global impact around three interlinked pillars (food, energy and finance). The EU will adopt an Action Plan to address the consequences of the war by intensifying its engagement with most impacted regions and countries. We are also supporting accountability for Russia's multiple violations of international law. In support of peace, security and multilateralism, the HRVP will intervene on EU-UN cooperation at the UN Security Council in June.

We will also continue our multifaceted engagement in other areas at the multilateral level. When it comes to supporting **democracy and human rights**, the EU will develop a Framework for Business and Human Rights to ensure strong coherence of our policies on responsible business conduct, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The implementation of the **European Green Deal** and the EU climate neutrality commitments by 2050 remain at the core of EU climate and energy initiatives, whose external dimension will be further strengthened. Operationalising the **Global Gateway** initiative is another overarching priority of EU external action for 2022. This includes the identification of impactful projects around the world as well as a series of high-level events to ensure visibility of the EU's work in this respect.

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We will likewise further develop **digital diplomacy** as an integral part of our foreign and security policy, including relevant bilateral and multilateral engagements, responding to the digital challenges through the promotion of European values and standards, and through regulation and international partnerships. Finally, we will continue developing comprehensive **migration partnerships**, tapping into the potential of the EU tools to advance migration objectives, including through CSDP missions and operations. Addressing the situation of persons fleeing Ukraine and promoting solidarity through active diplomatic engagement will continue to be a major focus of our work.

Becoming a geopolitical Union includes tackling the growing threat of **disinformation** and interference. While Russia's persistent disinformation campaigns remain a major challenge to address, we will look beyond them and aim for an all-actor approach, seeking constantly to identify and denounce manipulative behaviours threatening our democratic processes, institutions and the international, rules-based order. Under the umbrella of the Strategic Compass, we will further develop the instruments of the FIMI Toolbox to ensure a comprehensive response to the numerous challenges we face from Russia, China and other actors.

Few dimensions of the EU's external action have been so deeply impacted by Russia's war as its **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**. In this context, the EU will advance its implementation of the Strategic Compass within the agreed timelines. We will continue discussing the effectiveness of our missions and operations with a view to defining a new model for our military CSDP engagement, while also advancing the work on the Rapid Deployment Capacity. Work will furthermore continue on the common understanding of the mutual assistance clause (art. 42.7 TEU) and on the creation of a Hybrid Toolbox, a Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox and a Cyber Posture. We will likewise pursue discussions on defence spending and investments based on the defence investment gap analysis presented by the Commission and the High Representative, in coordination with the European Defence Agency on 18 May. The upcoming Coordinated Annual Review on Defence report, the ongoing review of the Headline Goal scenarios and the planned revision of the Capability Development Plan will further guide the work ahead on defence capabilities. Furthermore, the EU will enhance its security and defence partnerships, deepening and strengthening cooperation with NATO and the UN, as well as with the OSCE, AU ASEAN, and additional individual countries. A first Partnership Forum should take place before the end of 2022.

In 2022, Member States, the EEAS and the Commission are also entering the final phase of the **Civilian CSDP Compact**, stepping up their efforts to fully implement its commitments by summer 2023. We will develop a new Civilian Compact for 2023 in order to reinforce the role and capabilities of civilian missions to act as a key EU crisis management tool. We will also increase our level of ambition as well as build more flexible and adaptable mandates for civilian missions, improving their impact on reforms in host countries, addressing the staff status and modernising human resources to better equip the missions with the necessary expertise in key areas.

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With the upcoming **Space Strategy of Security and Defence**, we will strengthen our strategic posture in space and foster our ability to react to threats to space infrastructures and services. Enhancing our capacity for **conflict prevention**, peace mediation, and conflict sensitivity as a critical dimension in our Integrated Approach to conflicts and crises will likewise be of crucial importance. We will follow up the implementation on **Human Rights and Gender Equality into CSDP Missions and Operations** and develop concepts on some of the highlighted thematic areas such as children and armed conflict and conflict-related sexual violence. In addition, we will continue our efforts to develop an EU-wide human rights due diligence policy on security sector support.

We will continue to implement a **gender-transformative foreign and security policy** – committed to advancing gender equality and women and girls' empowerment around the world. In 2022, GAP III implementation comes to full speed. At country level, we will build on the CLIPs pursuing their visions and objectives. At regional level, we will ensure that all actions are gender mainstreamed. Focus will also be on the quality and impact of actions that promote gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels, including dialogue and partnerships with civil society and women organisations. Areas of special attention will include the systematic use of sex-disaggregated data, and advancing internal capacities, notably contributing to the establishment of gender-responsive leadership for EU senior management as the standard practice. The chosen approach for GAP III gained momentum, with evidence of increased coordination, joint initiatives and shared knowledge and expertise. Political and policy dialogue on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), and public diplomacy, are contributing to accountability. We will also continue to explore ways and options for a more friendly family policy in our low-to-medium risk civilian CSDP missions, which should contribute to an increased participation of women in CSDP.