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COVER NOTE

From:	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, signed by Ms. Belén MARTINEZ CARBONELL, Secretary-General
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
Subject:	Report from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy "Common Foreign and Security Policy Report - Our priorities in 2025"

Delegations will find attached document HR(2025)148.

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



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

of 25/06/2025

Common Foreign and Security Policy Report – Our Priorities in 2025

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

"Common Foreign and Security Policy Report - Our priorities in 2025"

This report covers events up to 31 May 2025.

The EU is navigating a series of crises and shocks against the background of a ‘new world order’ defined by the drastic shift from cooperation to competition. The use of force as a means of pursuing political objectives and settling disputes has become a new normal. Everything, from politics to the economy to the very fabric of states and societies, is being weaponised by hybrid actors, plunging the world into ‘shadow wars’ threatening international stability and prosperity. Major global transitions such as new technologies, climate and demographics kept adding to complexity, on top of geopolitical challenges and ongoing crises.

In response to these major changes in the global environment, the world is being reshaped. Some have been doing it through the use of force and war, like Russia; others like China by leveraging their economic clout. The US has started to withdraw from multilateral structures of the post-1945 world, while emerging powers across the globe have continued pushing assertively for greater role and voice in the world.

The EU continues to stand for its interests, based on multilateralism and shared values. Against this backdrop, work on global outreach, but also on countering the challenges mentioned above, have dominated the EU foreign policy agenda and its external action. Firstly, on Ukraine, the EU has provided support of almost EUR 150 billion in aid, including over EUR 50 billion of military assistance and trained more than 76 000 Ukrainian soldiers. The EU has also been supporting Ukraine to strengthen its hand at the negotiation table, in light of recent openings of peace talks. Secondly, in the Middle East, the EU has called for humanitarian aid deliveries to flow into Gaza, increased its engagement to sustain the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel, and continued working towards a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned inclusive transition process. Although not part of the reporting period, it is worth noting that following Israeli strike on Iran (June) and the Iran’s response a new cycle of violence began¹.

The EU has decided to take tangible steps towards a more capable and resilient Union to face the widest range of crises and threats against our territory and interests: the White Paper on Defence/Readiness 2030 and the new Preparedness Strategy. These projects were launched, also to respond to the EU seeing its own security, stability and prosperity challenged by global developments. Cooperation with the US remains a cornerstone in global security, including for the EU. Facing the

¹ The Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on Israel/Iran of 14 June 2025 and the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council of 17 June 2025 on Israel/Iran reflect the latest EU policy positions on that matter.

long-term strategic threat of Russia in this context and in an increasingly transactional world, the EU keeps building its own deterrence capabilities and is further developing its own strategic autonomy.

Responding to the current situation is also a time of opportunities. We have not been alone in our desire to protect the multilateral order, international law and support our values and principles. Strengthening alliances and partnerships has continued to be a major opportunity. Achievements such as the adoption of the UN's Pact for the Future showed that the EU, a reliable, predictable and credible actor, can make a difference in close cooperation with partners across the globe.

The EU has started to engage in a generational transformation. We have been doing so through Team Europe, and through a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach. Our unity is our strength. Our combined capabilities are our greatest asset.

(1) GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITIES

Europe

The **non-EU Western European** partners², the EU's closest partners, are committed to the rules-based multilateral order. The EU works with these partners to advance shared values in bilateral contexts as well as in multilateral fora. Together with the EU against Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway continued aligning with EU statements and restrictive measures; Switzerland, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Faroe Islands continued implementing equivalent restrictive measures. The EU continued holding bi-annual ministerial political dialogues with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway in the framework of the EU-EEA dialogue; a Joint Statement on "Strengthening EEA Foreign and Security Policy Cooperation" was signed in May 2025 between the High Representative and the foreign ministers of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, signalling the significance of our political dialogue. Bilateral consultations and dialogue with Iceland, Norway and Switzerland continued on a vast array of topics, including security and defence, through dedicated security and defence dialogues with Norway and Iceland. Early 2025, the Structured Dialogue on foreign policy and global issues between the EU and the Holy See was resumed. Geopolitically the Arctic is becoming more important with Russia no longer being a constructive interlocutor. Hybrid and cyber-attacks are on the rise. NATO and NATO Allies are deploying more assets and conducting more exercises and NATO Allies are deploying more assets and conducting more exercises. This has effects on the daily life of Arctic inhabitants, including indigenous peoples. In addition, climate change remains the most comprehensive threat to the Arctic regions. All these developments will require heightened attention in 2025.

Western Balkan partners have longstanding cooperation with the EU in the field of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Within her first six months in office, High Representative Kallas has visited all Western Balkans countries and met on a number of occasions with their leaders and ministers of foreign affairs, European integration and defence. Leaders of the European Union and of the Western Balkans met on 18 December 2024 for their first summit under the new EU leadership. The resulting Brussels Declaration highlighted pledges to commit to deepening cooperation on foreign policy, security and economic growth, bringing the Western Balkans partners closer to the EU already during the enlargement process. The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) reviewed recent developments in the region twice and held an informal exchange of views with Western Balkans foreign ministers on 25 June 2024 and 13 April 2025. Western Balkan partners continued to provide inputs to FAC discussions and were debriefed after FAC meetings. The bi-annual informal CFSP Dialogue at political directors' level between the EU and the Western Balkan partners continued, with the latest session held on 2 April 2025 in Brussels. **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia** aligned fully with EU foreign policy, including sanctions on Russia. **Serbia**

² Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Holy See, Faroe Islands (as self-governing country within the Kingdom of Denmark).

continues to not align fully, in particular with sanctions on Russia. **Kosovo*** voluntarily aligned with those measures. Most Western Balkan partners continued to align with the vast majority of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions condemning Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its humanitarian impact. Progress in the **Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue** has been achieved, in the areas of missing persons, economic normalisation, and freedom of movement. High Representative Kallas visited both Kosovo and Serbia in preparation of a High-Level Dialogue Meeting she will host to advance the implementation of the 2023 Ohrid Agreement. The EU concluded its first Security and Defence Partnerships with the Western Balkans last year, namely with **Albania** (December 2024) and **North Macedonia** (November 2024). In the context of the implementation of the Security and Defence Partnerships, the EU has launched new Security and Defence Dialogues with both partners respectively in April and May 2025. The **European Peace Facility (EPF)** assistance measures are used to support regional initiatives, e.g. the Balkan Medical Task Force with a support package of EUR 6 million adopted in 2022, as well as capacity-building objectives at bilateral level. To date, two support packages to support **Bosnia and Herzegovina** were adopted respectively in 2021 and 2022, worth EUR 20 million overall, as well as overall support of EUR 38 million for **North Macedonia** (two support packages adopted respectively in 2023 and 2024, worth EUR 23 million, and an additional EUR 15 million in 2025). **Albania** benefits from one assistance measure adopted in 2024 worth EUR 13 million, and the first bilateral assistance measure to support **Montenegro** was adopted in 2025, worth EUR 6 million.

Five Western Balkan partners have signed Framework Participation Agreements allowing them to contribute to EU CSDP missions and operations. The EU still deploys today a military operation and civilian mission in the Western Balkans, namely the **European Union Force Althea** (EUFOR Althea) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the **European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo** (EULEX Kosovo). The EU also continues to support the mandate of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor Office. The EU deployed an election monitoring mission for the Kosovo elections on 9 February 2025.

In 2024, EU-**Türkiye** relations were in a phase of re-engagement, taking place at a challenging and complex geopolitical context over developments in Ukraine and in the Middle East, and in particular in Syria following the collapse of the Assad regime in December 2024. At the same time, a political initiative to end terrorism by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and address the Kurdish issue was undertaken by a coalition partner of the ruling party, and led to PKK's decision to disarm and dissolve following a breakthrough call of its imprisoned leader Ocalan. EU-Türkiye relations were developing under an agenda framed by April 2024 European Council Conclusions that focused on ways to advance implementation of the recommendations of the November 2023 Joint Communication on EU-Türkiye relations in a phased, proportionate and reversible manner. The European Council also stressed the particular importance it attaches to resumption of and progress in the Cyprus settlement talks in further enhancing EU- Türkiye relations. Since then, several High Level Dialogues took place (on trade in July 2024 and on economy in April 2025), and Türkiye's Foreign Minister Fidan had an exchange with EU foreign ministers in August 2024 in the margins of the informal meeting of EU

□ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

foreign ministers (so-called ‘Gymnich’) and took part in the informal working lunch with Foreign Ministers of selected candidate countries and potential candidates at the margins of the Gymnich in May 2025. High-level contacts have taken place since the beginning of the new European Commission’s mandate: President of the European Commission von der Leyen visited Ankara in December 2024, while High Representative Kallas and Commissioner Lahbib visited Türkiye in January 2025. President of the European Council Costa also engaged with President Erdogan on a number of occasions, including by debriefing him, along with other non-EU Allies, on the outcome of European Council discussions with regard to defence and security. In 2025, the domestic political situation was tense, triggered by the arrest of Istanbul Mayor Imamoğlu and hundreds of other political figures, representatives of civil society and media, and other protestors that took part in demonstrations. The EU has clearly expressed serious concerns about these developments, which go against expectations that exist in relation to Türkiye’s obligations as candidate country. At the same time, the EU is maintaining communication channels open and keeping re-engagement ongoing in particular in areas of joint interest.

At the July 2024 European Political Community meeting hosted by the **United Kingdom**, Prime Minister Starmer signalled the intention of the new Labour government to seek a “re-set” in relations with the European Union, including in the field of foreign policy, security and defence. Starmer joined the Informal EU Leaders Retreat on defence in February and received the High Representative in London in March. UK Foreign Secretary Lammy was a guest at the October 2024 FAC where he expressed an interest in negotiating a Security and Defence Partnership (SDP) with the EU. In May, the Council gave the mandate to the European External Action Service (EEAS) to negotiate a Security and Defence Partnership (SDP) with the UK which was eventually concluded at the first **EU-UK Summit** on 19 May. It provides a comprehensive and balanced political framework for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and UK and a substantial incentive for joint work on security and defence. The SDP reaffirms the continued close EU-UK collaboration in support of Ukraine, including on sanctions and training of Ukrainian military personnel. The second round of Dialogues under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement on Cyber and on Counterterrorism took place in December 2024 and February 2025 respectively. Informal consultations and pragmatic cooperation between the EEAS and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on geographic and thematic areas of common interest continued. On 20-23 May, EEAS Managing Director for Peace, Security, and Defence represented the High Representative at a defence industry symposium jointly organised by the EU and UK industry associations and held bilateral meetings on implementation of the SDP. Coordination between EU Naval Force Operation ASPIDES and Operation Prosperity Guardian (to which the UK contributes) supports the success of the EU operation in the Red Sea.

Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asia

The European Union continued providing **Ukraine** and its people with very significant political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military, and diplomatic support. The EU’s response continues to follow three main tracks:

- (i) wide-range support to Ukraine (overall EU assistance to Ukraine and its people by the EU and its Member States amounts to almost EUR 150 billion);

- (ii) keeping pressure on Russia (isolating and holding Russia to account, including through restrictive measures, with over 2 400 individuals and entities sanctioned); and
- (iii) global outreach to address the consequences of Russia's war of aggression (including on food and energy security).

On 26 June 2024, the EU signed security commitments with Ukraine, reaffirming its long-term support to help Ukraine defend itself, resist destabilisation, and deter future aggression. The EU continued to provide Ukraine with broad support.

Military assistance by the EU and Member States has exceeded EUR 50.3 billion, of which EUR 6.1 billion was financed under the European Peace Facility. In addition, Member States set aside EUR 5 billion within a dedicated fund for further military assistance to Ukraine, the Ukraine Assistance Fund, which was created on 18 March 2024. For the first time, revenues from immobilised Russian Central Bank assets were used to finance urgent military assistance to Ukraine.

In July 2024, the first instalment of EUR 1.4 billion was transferred by the Central Securities Depository. It was used to finance the immediate deliveries of artillery ammunition and air defence and strengthen cooperation with the Ukrainian defence industry. Most deliveries of equipment were concluded by the end of 2024. A second instalment of EUR 1.85 billion were transferred to the EPF in April 2025. Funds will be used to deliver urgently needed artillery ammunition and air defence equipment, as well as to further support the Ukrainian defence industry in 2025. The EU has also delivered on its goal to provide one million rounds of artillery ammunition to Ukraine by the end of 2024. Furthermore, in 2025 it aims to double the goal and provide Ukraine with two million rounds of large calibre ammunition.

The **EU Military Assistance Mission** (EUMAM Ukraine) trained more than 76 000 troops. The civilian **EU Advisory Mission** (EUAM Ukraine) continued to support the reform of the civilian security sector including war-related needs such as investigation and prosecution of international crimes, and re-establishing the rule of law in the Liberated and Adjacent territories.

The EU continued also its economic and financial support through the **Ukraine Facility** to ensure stable and sustainable financing to support Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction, and modernisation.

Following the G7 leaders agreement to provide a total of approximately USD 50 billion in loans to Ukraine, backed by the profits stemming from immobilised Russian sovereign assets, the EU adopted in October 2024 a package of an exceptional macro-financial assistance loans of up to approximately EUR 18 billion, aimed to maintain financial stability in Ukraine, as well as to create fiscal space for its urgent needs, including defence.

The first intergovernmental conference **opening the accession negotiations with Ukraine** took place on 25 June 2024 in Luxembourg, followed immediately by the launch of the bilateral screening process. Bilateral screening meetings, aimed at assessing Ukraine's alignment with the EU acquis, started in July 2024 and will last until the end of 2025. The screening of Cluster 1 (Fundamentals) has been completed, and the Commission has presented its report to the Council. In 2024 Ukraine reached a 95% rate of alignment with statements of the High Representative on behalf of the EU and Council Decisions on restrictive measures.

The EU participated in the ‘Summit on Peace in Ukraine’ on 15-16 June 2024 convened by Switzerland, and it supported Swiss and Ukrainians efforts with global outreach. The EU has and will continue supporting ongoing peace efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Relations between the EU and Ukraine continued to be guided by the Association Agreement and its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. On 9 April 2025, the meeting of the EU-Ukraine Association Council marked 10 years of Ukraine moving closer to the EU, and provided an opportunity to reaffirm the EU’s steadfast support and to take stock of key achievements.

Accountability remained one of the key priorities for the EU with a view to the establishing of the **Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression** on 9 May 2025. Furthermore, the EU supported international efforts to bring back Ukrainian children unlawfully deported or transferred by Russia. In this context, in June 2024 the EU joined the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children as an observer, and supported the “Bring Kids Back Ukraine” initiative.

As regards Republic of **Moldova**³, accession negotiations were formally launched in June 2024. Bilateral screening meetings, aimed at assessing Moldova’s alignment with the EU acquis, have been ongoing since July 2024 and will last until the end of 2025. The screening of Cluster 1 (Fundamentals) has been completed, and the Commission has presented its report to the Council. Moldova has substantially increased its alignment EU’s CFSP from 54% in 2022 to 82% in mid-April 2025.

Moldova held presidential elections and a referendum on anchoring EU accession in the Constitution in October 2024. These votes were targeted by unprecedented Russian interference. President Maia Sandu and the ‘yes’ vote won the referendum.

The EU is the largest donor in Moldova. In October 2024, during her visit to Chisinau, President von der Leyen announced the **Moldova Growth Plan** – the largest-ever financial package for the country which will amount to EUR 1.9 billion.

The EU and Moldova continued to significantly increase their dialogue and cooperation in the field of security and defence. Moldova was the first EU partner to sign a **Security and Defence Partnership** in May 2024. Since 2021, seven assistance measures for an overall amount of EUR 197 million were adopted under the **EPF** to enhance the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces of Moldova, which makes it the second recipient of EPF after Ukraine. A package of EUR 50 million was adopted in 2024 and of EUR 60 million in 2025.

The European Union Partnership Mission (EUPM) continued to provide support for the reform of Moldova’s security architecture, the setting up of new institutional bodies and the improvement of inter-agency coordination. It helped create a national crisis management coordination body. In 2023, the Mission supported the creation of the Strategic Communications and Countering Disinformation Centre (StratCom Centre). Since then, EUPM has helped to develop methodologies for detecting and responding to disinformation. In December 2024, the Centre completed the national counter-FIMI (Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference) framework. In 2025, support will shift to

³ Hereafter Moldova.

building the capacity of the national defenders network against FIMI. EUPM also deployed two Specialised Teams on Crisis Management Training and Exercises and on Electoral Interference through Illicit Funding. In April-May 2025, at the request of the Moldovan authorities, the EU deployed its **Hybrid Rapid Response Teams** to provide short-term targeted assistance to strengthen the country's resilience against hybrid threats.

Since the establishment of a **dedicated EU sanctions regime** against those seeking to destabilise Moldova and undermine the country's sovereignty, democratic institutions, and the rule of law, three rounds of listings have been adopted, targeting a total of 16 individuals and 2 entities with ties to fugitive oligarchs and Moscow's proxies, the latest one in October 2024.

Moldova began the year 2025 facing an **energy crisis** after Russia halted gas supplies to the Transnistrian region, nearly triggering a humanitarian emergency aimed at destabilising the rest of Moldova. The crisis in the Transnistrian region was averted thanks to EU emergency support, with energy bills on the right bank compensated to pre-crisis levels thanks to EU funding. The EU remained firm in its commitment to a comprehensive, peaceful and sustainable settlement of the **Transnistria conflict** and supported continued dialogue between the sides, in view of further confidence-building and to avoid destabilisation.

The implementation of the **Association Agreement** continued and political dialogue advanced with the EU-Republic of Moldova Association Council held on 21 May 2024 and 4 June 2025. The first EU-Moldova Summit is planned for July 2025, demonstrating the EU's commitment to Moldova's European path.

As a result of **Georgia's** persistent democratic backsliding, the EU downgraded political contacts, suspended and reallocated direct assistance benefitting the authorities, and increased support to civil society and independent media. The visa-free regime for Georgian diplomatic and service passport holders was suspended. The June 2024 European Council concluded that the course of action taken by Georgian authorities jeopardises Georgia's EU path leading to a *de facto* halt of the accession process. This position was further endorsed by the European Council's conclusions of December 2024. The EU-Georgia Human Rights Dialogue did not take place in 2024.

Georgia's security situation remained calm and stable despite the tense regional situation. As part of EU measures to react to Georgia's democratic backsliding, no new EPF assistance measure to support Georgia's defence forces was adopted in 2024. The adoption of a 2025 measure is not foreseen due to the worsening political and human rights situation in the country. The EU continued its engagement in line with its Non-Recognition and Engagement Policy towards the occupied breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and continued to be involved in conflict resolution efforts, including through the work of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia and the EU Monitoring Mission (**EUMM Georgia**). The Geneva International Discussions, co-chaired by the EUSR, continued to take place regularly in 2024 and the participants (Georgia, Russia, United States and Georgia's occupied breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia) remained committed to the only international format set to deal with the consequences of the 2008 Russia-Georgia war. EUMM continued its daily patrolling activities along Administrative Boundary Lines between Georgia and South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Through its confidence building activities,

in particular the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism and the Hotline, the Mission contributed to de-escalation of potential volatile situations and facilitated constructive dialogue. Georgia continued its non-alignment with the sanction regimes on Russia and Belarus and the number of direct flights and destinations between Georgia and Russia has been steadily increasing since the resumption of direct flights in May 2023. Overall, Georgia's record of alignment with the EU CFSP positions and decisions remains low (53% in 2023 and 56% so far in 2025).

The EU continued to support efforts towards lasting peace between **Azerbaijan and Armenia**, demonstrating its commitment to a peaceful and prosperous South Caucasus. With more than 5 000 patrols conducted since its launch in February 2023, the civilian **European Union Mission to Armenia** (EUMA) continued to be an important component of the EU's efforts in supporting peace and stability in the region. The unarmed Mission observes and reports on the situation on the ground, and contributes to EU-supported normalisation efforts between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenian counterparts expressed strong support for EUMA, highlighting a significant decrease in border incidents and increase in favourable public opinion about the European Union since the Mission's deployment. In January 2025, the Council extended the mandate of EUMA for two years, until 19 February 2027. In 2024, the EU also continued to support the mine clearance action activities in both Armenia and Azerbaijan and continued providing the much needed support to help conflict-affected populations and improve the livelihoods of vulnerable people in both countries.

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 and Armenia are about to conclude negotiations on an ambitious new EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda, that will be underpinned by the EUR 270 million Resilience and Growth Plan for Armenia for the period 2024-2027. The EU and Armenia have worked to deepen cooperation in security and defence. For the first time, on 22 July 2024, the EU adopted an assistance measure for Armenia under the European Peace Facility. The EUR 10 million non-lethal measure enhanced the logistical capacities of the Armenian Armed Forces, and contributed to improved protection of civilians in crises and emergencies. It also enhanced the resilience of Armenia and accelerated the interoperability of its Armed Forces in case of possible future participation of the country in international military missions and operations, including those deployed by the EU. In this context, the EU finalised negotiations with Armenia on a Framework Participation Agreement, paving the way for Armenia to participate in future EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations. In addition, experts mobilised through the EU Security Sector Governance Facility assessed and mapped Armenia's security sector governance and reform.

Azerbaijan remained an important energy partner in the EU's efforts to diversify energy sources and trade routes. The EU also continued cooperation with Azerbaijan to help diversify its economy, including through the EU's Economic Investment Plan. High Representative Kallas visited Baku on 25 April 2025 in order to discuss future cooperation based on common interests and in respect of the EU's fundamental principles. The EU thereby underscored the importance of the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as the basis for the bilateral relationship. In the aftermath of the High Representative's visit to Baku, French National Théo Clerc was released from

detention in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, as a follow-up to the High Representative's visit to Baku, the 6th EU-Azerbaijan High Level Security Dialogue at Political Director's level was held on 22 May in Brussels.

In **Belarus**, human rights violations and repressions against all segments of the Belarusian society continued and worsened, especially ahead of the so-called presidential elections of 26 January 2025. There are approximately 1 200 political prisoners in Belarus. The EU responded to this repression in a united way through its policy of Support, Solidarity, and Sanctions, which is outlined in Council conclusions adopted on 19 February 2024. Since the fraudulent 2020 presidential election, the EU has committed EUR 170 million in assistance to the Belarusian people. The EU has also progressively expanded its restrictive measures in light of the situation in Belarus and the regime's support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU has now adopted several packages of sanctions on Belarus, both sectoral and individual. The latest package was adopted in March 2025. The EU continues to raise the human rights violations in international fora and to contribute to the international efforts to hold the perpetrators accountable. The EU also continues to assist the Belarusian democratic forces and civil society. The EU remains ready to invest up to EUR 3 billion in Belarus after a future democratic transition. Together with the European Commission and in cooperation with the European Parliament, the EEAS hosted the "Belarus Days" on 9 - 13 December 2024 in Brussels, with participation of the High Representative. The event brought together representatives of Belarusian democratic forces, civil society, independent media, human rights organisations, cultural institutions, as well as the Belarusian diaspora, alongside international organisations, demonstrating the EU's solidarity and continued commitment to the Belarusian people at the start of the new European legislature.

Following the unprovoked full-scale military invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, which followed its aggression that started in 2014 with the illegal annexation of Crimea, **Russia** continued to escalate its war of aggression. The European Council continued its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Along with like-minded partners, the EU successfully coordinated Russia's international condemnation and isolation. This has prevented Russia from being elected or re-elected to several bodies. For example, Russia failed to win seats in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' Executive Council, in the World Health Organisation's Europe Standing Committee and in the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of Transports Internationaux Routiers Convention Administrative Committee. The EU continued to adopt 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, such as against those responsible for the war against Ukraine, including those enabling the Russian military-industrial complex, continuous human rights violations in occupied Ukrainian territories including the deportation of children, domestic violations of human rights and the use of riot control agents by Russian forces in Ukraine. It adopted measures to tackle sanction circumvention—an increasing concern—including through targeting the so-called shadow fleet. A new sanctions framework allows targeting individuals and entities engaged in actions and policies by the Russian government, which undermine the fundamental values of the EU and its Member States,

their security, independence and integrity, as well as those of international organisations and non-EU countries. Thanks to this new sanctions regime, the EU can address a variety of hybrid threats. The EU's sanctions have and will continue to have a significant effect on Russia's economy. They increased the cost of and curtailed the ability for Russia to carry out the war and showed the EU's determination and unity. The EU decided to use extraordinary profits generated by the immobilization of assets of the Russian Central Bank to provide recovery, reconstruction and military support to Ukraine. Moreover, the EU continued to support Russian civil society, human rights defenders and independent media inside and outside Russia.

In 2024, the **Eastern Partnership (EaP)** policy remained a flexible, incentive-based cooperation framework tailored to the needs of partner countries. One of the core strengths of the EaP continues to be its focus on critical reforms notably in the rule of law, justice sectors and its "inter-societal" dimension, bringing together youth, civil society organisations (CSOs), local and regional actors, media, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This dimension has been crucial for the Belarusian and Georgian civil society organisations. In March 2025, the EaP Senior Officials Meeting endorsed the 2025-2027 Workplan focusing on 1) accompanying Ukraine and Moldova on the path to EU membership, 2) strengthening the regional agenda on security, democratic and societal resilience, 3) boosting economic development and connectivity through the EaP Economic and Investment Plan, 4) re-focusing engagement with civil society in view of the increasingly authoritarian contexts in some partner countries.

The EU continued to contribute to **cooperation in Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea** through the relevant formats of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the Northern Dimension. Reflecting the changed geopolitical environment in the region, the Northern Dimension policy cooperation has been phasing out activities and undergoing closure, while the BEAC is discussing its future organization. The Baltic Sea States committed to continue cooperation in the CBSS framework, shifting its priorities on political and security issues, in view of the increased threats in the Baltic Sea region (notably hybrid threats), the shadow fleet, and undersea cable infrastructure attacks.

In 2024, the EU and its Member States were active in the framework of the **Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**, which remains an important diplomatic platform and normative framework in spite of difficulties linked to the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The OSCE Ministerial Council meeting on 6 December 2024 allowed for progress on the nomination of the OSCE hierarchy and of the Chairs-in-Office (Finland in 2025 and Switzerland in 2026). At the OSCE Warsaw Human Dimension Conference (30 September – 11 October 2024), the EU co-organised a side event with like-minded delegations on the arbitrary detention of Ukrainian civilians.

Relations between the EU and the countries of **Central Asia** continued to deepen in 2024 in a continuously difficult regional and international context. Challenges generated by Russia's military aggression against Ukraine and the situation in Afghanistan were the main security factors impacting the developing relationship. Both regions identified joint interests and translated them into concrete areas of cooperation. High Representative Kallas chaired the **20th EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting** (27 March 2025, Ashgabat), which reconfirmed the shared interest to foster closer ties. The

Ministerial meeting, as well as the High Representative's visits to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, prepared the ground for the first-ever **EU-Central Asia Summit** (3-4 April 2025, Samarkand). The Summit brought together President Costa and President von der Leyen with the five Central Asian Heads of State. In a Joint Summit Declaration, the leaders announced the status of their relations being elevated to that of a 'strategic partnership'. Furthermore, they endorsed an EU-Central Asia declaration of intent on critical raw materials, reaffirming the EU's engagement with Central Asia in this strategic area of cooperation. The EU and Central Asia continued to advance on the development of the **Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor (TCTC)**, a Global Gateway flagship project, including the signature of several projects in March 2025. The next Global Gateway Investors Forum for EU-Central Asia Transport Connectivity and EU-Central Asia Economic Forum will be held in Uzbekistan in late 2025. Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with the Central Asian countries are either in force (**Kazakhstan**), signed (**the Kyrgyz Republic**), about to be signed (**Uzbekistan**) or moving to initialling (**Tajikistan**). The EU, represented by Special Envoy on Sanctions, and the Central Asian countries continued their work on ensuring compliance with international sanctions against Russia and Belarus, reducing sanctions circumvention on the territories of the Central Asian countries.

Middle East and North Africa

The ongoing conflicts in the Middle East continued to be a major priority of EU foreign policy throughout 2024. The **war in Gaza** between Israel and Hamas, the humanitarian crisis in the Strip, and the regional escalation of the conflict including attacks on Israel by Iran and its affiliated groups, such as Hezbollah or the Houthis, were discussed at every Foreign Affairs Council and every European Council throughout the year.

The EU focused on pushing for a ceasefire, the unconditional release of the hostages, the provision of humanitarian aid, protecting civilians in line with international law and international humanitarian law, and reviving a political horizon towards the two-state solution. The EU co-convened the ministerial meeting in New York in September 2024, which established the Global Alliance for the implementation of the two-state solution, and co-hosted a follow-up meeting in Brussels. The EU also co-hosted together with Norway the 'International Partners Meeting for Palestine' in Brussels in May. The EU continued to maintain its dialogue and bilateral relations with both Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The EU support package to the Palestinian Authority (PA) amounted to almost EUR 400 million, linked to agreement of a programme of reform. The EU also maintained its support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), based on an agreement to respond to EU concerns on the allegations concerning the Agency. The EU supported the implementation of the Colonna Report. Work continued on preparing the **European Union Border Assistance Mission in Rafah** (EUBAM Rafah) for its redeployment on 31 January 2025 to the Rafah Crossing Point (RCP) alongside the Palestinian Authorities' personnel. EUBAM Rafah enabled the crossing of over 4000 wounded persons with their families to access care. It has withdrawn from the RCP in light of Israel's resumption of hostilities on 18 March 2025, but remains on stand-by. The **European Union Mission for the Support of Palestinian Police and Rule of Law (EUPOL COPPS)** continued its work to support the establishment of more effective and sustainable

policing and wider criminal justice arrangements under Palestinian ownership, as well as reform of the security and justice sector.

In this context, the Strategic and Comprehensive partnership developed with **Jordan** (and signed in January 2025), accompanied with a significant financial package, was instrumental in deepening cooperation with a key partner for the EU, also supporting Jordan's modernisation process through political and economic reforms. Besides significant development cooperation and macro-financial assistance, EU support included the Election Observation Mission deployed in September 2024, as well as cooperation on security matters, with assistance under the European Peace Facility for the first time.

In 2024, relations with **Egypt** were strengthened and elevated to a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership (SCP) on 17 March 2024, supported by an EU financial package of EUR 7.4 billion, including EUR 5 billion in macro-financial assistance. Regarding political relations, exchanges intensified at bilateral and multilateral level to reduce instability in the region, notably in Gaza, Sudan and the Red Sea. The EU and Egypt fostered political dialogue through numerous high-level visits to Egypt by the President of the European Commission, the High Representative, numerous Commissioners (including Home Affairs and Migration), and the EU's Special Representative for Human Rights. Meanwhile, the EU also ensured participation in the Ministerial Conference in Cairo to enhance the Humanitarian Response in Gaza (December) and Emergency League of Arab States Summit on Gaza (March 2025), conveying the EU's support and acknowledgement of Egypt's important role in the region. On the economic front, a major deliverable of the new Partnership was the **EU-Egypt Investment Conference** in June 2024, with the President of the Commission and the Egyptian President attending the signature of the first Memorandum of Understanding to provide Egypt with EUR 1 billion in short-term macro-financial assistance, disbursed on 18 December 2024. In 2024, a new cycle of sub-committees kicked off that will continue throughout 2025 in the run-up to the first EU-Egypt Leaders' Summit expected to take place at the end of 2025 in Brussels. The Council also approved a first EPF assistance measure for the benefit of Egypt.

In **Syria**, the EEAS has maintained throughout 2024 the EU's principled position—including against normalisation with the Assad regime—and continued to support the Syrian-led, UN-facilitated political process for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2254. The EU has also continued to lead international financial assistance, remaining the first donor in support of the Syrian people and mobilising the international community, notably through the Brussels Conference on Supporting the future of Syria and the Region (8th edition held in April-May 2024). When Assad's brutal regime fell in December 2024, finally providing a chance for all Syrians to reunite and rebuild their country, the EEAS, working together with the Commission, put forward swift proposals for the EU to support a peaceful, inclusive and Syrian-led transition that fulfils the aspirations of all Syrians, using the full spectrum of EU tools and policy areas. The EU has engaged with the transitional authorities and civil society, acknowledging some positive steps towards an inclusive transition but also many challenges and continued concerns. In the context of the still dire humanitarian and economic situation, the ninth **Brussels Conference on Syria** (17 March 2025), which Syria's interim Foreign Minister attended for the first time, reaffirmed the unity of the international community in support of an inclusive transition, and gathered EUR 5.8 billion. In February, upon a proposal by the

EEAS, the EU suspended a first package of sanctions on key economic sectors in Syria and on 28 May, the EU lifted all economic sanctions on Syria, while maintaining sanctions on Assad and his accomplices as well as sanctions based on security grounds (e.g. arms trade).

In **Lebanon**, the EEAS and the High Representative warned against the escalation of the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel and deployed intense diplomatic efforts, including via high-level visits, to urge regional de-escalation, respond to humanitarian needs, and call for a ceasefire, which eventually materialised in November 2024. The EU is actively involved to consolidate such a ceasefire, notably by supporting the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and empowering the Lebanese Armed Forces through the European Peace Facility. The EU's engagement towards Lebanon was also illustrated by the visits of the President of the Commission, who announced a package of support of EUR 1 billion, by the High Representative, and by Commissioner Šuica. With the settlement of the long-standing institutional impasse and power vacuum, the EU has been able to actively support the reform-oriented agenda of the new leadership with a view to relaunching the bilateral partnership and convening an Association Council by end 2025. In relation to the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel, the EU has scaled up its assistance via the European Peace Facility, with the approval of an additional assistance package worth 60 million. This support will help the Lebanese Armed Forces ability to redeploy in the South and help restore livelihood and security in the region.

The EU strategic partnership with the countries of the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** experienced a historic upsurge with the **first EU-GCC Summit** on 16 October 2024 in Brussels. Since then, the EU has capitalised on the positive momentum to further implement the Joint Communication on A Strategic Partnership with the Gulf (2022), particularly the commitment to offer Strategic Partnership Agreements to all GCC countries. President Michel visited Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE in August/September 2024 ahead of the first EU-GCC summit. High Representative Borrell visited United Arab Emirates in September 2024. High Representative Kallas was in Saudi Arabia on 12 January 2025 for the Riyadh meeting on Syria.

A second iteration of the **EU-GCC Regional Security Dialogue** led by the EEAS Deputy Secretary General and the GCC Assistant Secretary General took place on 24 April 2025 in Brussels. There, both sides agreed to pursue deeper cooperation (information exchange, expert training, and regular technical and political-level dialogue) in the areas of counter-terrorism, cyber and hybrid threats, non-proliferation, maritime security, as well as disaster preparedness. EU and GCC met for the annual Political Committee meeting in Riyadh on 15 May 2025. The activities of the EUSR for the Gulf have strengthened and boosted mutual trust at all levels between the EU and the Gulf countries. In this regard, the annual High Level forum on Gulf Security and Cooperation organised under the auspices of the EUSR has been a valued addition to EU-GCC dialogue. From 25 to 29 May, Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs co-chaired the political dialogues with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman which allowed for in-depth discussions on regional affairs including Gaza, Syria, Lebanon as well as the future of bilateral cooperation.

EU engagement with the **6 GCC partners** made further progress via regular political dialogue, Senior Officials Meetings and Human Rights dialogue. The objective for 2025 is to launch negotiations for

bilateral and binding Strategic Partnership Agreements with the different Gulf partners to duly mirror current intense and multi-faceted relations.

The EU continued to support **Iraq**'s growing focus on economy (e.g. supporting European Investment Bank's and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's expansion to the country), while making progress on migration, with returns and readmissions now taking place, and reinforcing its institutional engagement by completing the cycle of subcommittees on trade and energy. The **European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM)** in Iraq maintained its support to the civilian aspects of Iraqi Security Sector Reform, together with the EU Delegation in Iraq. Priorities for 2025 include supporting the process leading to the parliamentary elections on 11 November, holding the 4th (ministerial) EU-Iraq Cooperation Council, enhancing EU support for the Iraqi repatriations from North-East Syria Daesh camps, and increasing EUAM's footprint in the security sector in coordination with like-minded partners (e.g. NATO Mission Iraq) in view of the termination of United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) presence at the request of the Iraqi government.

In **Yemen**, the EU has updated its policy through the Council Conclusions on Yemen on 20 May that strongly condemned the Houthis' aggressive regional stances, including their attacks in the Red Sea affecting international maritime trade and against Israel; committed to continue support for the Government of Yemen including in the security sector; addressed the growing concerns of arms proliferation in the Red Sea region and included continued humanitarian aid to address the dire situation in the country. The EU is concerned about the arbitrary detention of aid workers and staff from international organisations by the Houthis. The **European Union Naval Force Operation ASPIDES** is active in the Red Sea, with a defensive mandate and in a highly degraded security environment under the threat of missiles and drones. It is successfully delivering on the strategic objective to safeguard merchant shipping and has protected over 600 vessels since its launch in February 2024. In 2025, the EU continued to support the Government of Yemen, UN Special Envoy mediation efforts, and maintained its engagement to tackle arms proliferation in the region by supporting United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM) and the Yemeni Coast Guard. The EU provided life-saving and sustained aid to the Yemenis, faced with one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

The EU continued its engagement with **Algeria**, with a particular focus on enhancing the energy partnership, which is successfully implemented and still offers potential for mutually beneficial expansion in the area of renewables. Dialogue with Algeria also addressed other areas of joint interest where cooperation is being stepped up, such as migration, climate action, economic relations and investments, culture and tourism, as well as areas where enhanced cooperation would be mutually beneficial, including regional security.

The EU has remained engaged in **Libya**. The **European Union Naval Force Operation IRINI** remains the only explicitly mandated actor enforcing the UN arms embargo on Libya. The **European Union Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya)** continues to provide capacity-building to Libyan authorities in the areas of border management and law enforcement. Both IRINI and EUBAM are key components of the EU approach to Libya as their mandates have been recently extended until 31 March 2027 and 30 June 2027, respectively.

In **Morocco**, the EU continued building on its deep and multi-faceted partnership, including through new initiatives such as dedicated exchanges on Africa. In October 2024, the EU took note of the European Court of Justice's rulings relating to the 2019 EU-Morocco agreements, while expressing its firm intention to preserve and continue strengthening close relations with Morocco in all areas of the EU-Morocco partnership, all of which will remain a priority in 2025. In November 2024, Commissioner Várhelyi visited Rabat to launch a support programme for the post-earthquake reconstruction and reaffirm the EU's commitment to the EU-Morocco Partnership, which is expected to be taken to the next level in 2025.

The EU continued to engage with **Tunisia**, including on the implementation of the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2023 and embedded in the broader institutional framework of the EU-Tunisia Association Agreement. MoU monitoring missions were carried out during the reporting period, in order to take stock of the progress achieved under the five pillars of the MoU. Furthermore, a new positive dynamic has been set in motion through the resumption of several thematic sub-committees under the Association Agreement.

The **Union for the Mediterranean** (UfM) continued its work towards enhanced regional development, cooperation, and integration. The EU has remained fully engaged in supporting the UfM's reform efforts focusing on strengthening the organisation's mandate, capacity for action, and resources. The Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean, under the Co-chairing of the High Representative on 28 October, discussed the critical situation in the Middle East, and, most importantly, delivered a mandate to conclude the Reform process, and review the 2017 Roadmap with a new vision and priorities for the UfM. The Anna Lindh Foundation continued its activities to promote inter-cultural dialogue, including a successful conference, co-organised with the EEAS and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, on protecting pluralism and religious heritage.

Africa

In Africa, the EU continued to advance the implementation of the commitments under the **Joint Vision for 2030** agreed during the 6th European Union - African Union (AU) Summit (February 2022): i) Africa-Europe Global Gateway Investment Package worth EUR 150 billion; ii) peace, security and governance; iii) migration and mobility; and iv) multilateralism.

African countries have been very actively advancing its quest for greater representation in the international system. The EU Political and Security Committee and the AU Peace and Security Council held their annual Joint Consultation meeting in Addis Ababa on 21 November 2024. On 20 November 2024, a Senior Officials' Meeting under the Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance was also held in Addis Ababa.

On 21 May, the High Representative co-chaired in Brussels the **3rd EU-AU Ministerial** alongside her Angolan counterpart, Tete António. The event brought together over 70 delegations, most represented at ministerial level, marking a successful and high-level engagement. The meeting fulfilled three key objectives: i) it delivered a strong political message highlighting the importance of a mutually beneficial partnership between Europe and Africa, reinforcing the EU's role as a reliable partner amid a challenging geopolitical landscape; ii) it reviewed progress on the commitments made

during the 2022 EU-AU Summit; iii) it laid the groundwork for the next AU-EU Summit. The Ministerial concluded with the adoption of a Joint Communiqué as well as with the release of a Preliminary Monitoring Report outlining the implementation status of the Joint Vision 2030.

The EU's role as a peace and security actor in Africa has been materialising both through the Continent-to-Continent partnership and bilaterally, with eight civilian and military missions and operations, and over EUR 1 billion in support through the European Peace Facility. In Africa, the EPF has effectively supported both the military components of African-led peace-support operations (e.g. the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia ATMIS, the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the Multinational Joint Task Force, or the South Africa Development Community's Mission in Mozambique SAMIM) as well as partners bilaterally (Benin, Cameroon, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique and Somalia).

On 12 and 13 February 2025, EEAS Managing Director for Africa organised in Brussels the **first ever consultations on Africa with Ukraine** with Ukraine's Special Representative for the Middle East and Africa. It marked a key opportunity to reinforce EU-Ukraine cooperation in Africa and support Ukraine's outreach for a just and lasting peace.

Southern Africa and Indian Ocean

The EU further deepened its partnership with the countries of the region and with the **South Africa Development Community** (SADC). In February, the High Representative travelled to South Africa for a three-day visit to hold the 16th EU-South Africa ministerial political dialogue and take part in the G20 foreign ministers meeting under South Africa's chairing. President Costa and President von der Leyen travelled to Cape Town on 13 March 2025 for the first Summit with **South Africa** since 2018. In an unstable geopolitical context, these very successful engagements gave new impetus to the EU-South Africa strategic partnership, with numerous concrete outcomes: agreement to launch negotiations towards a Clean Trade and Investment Partnership and a Memorandum of Understanding on Critical Raw Materials; establishment of a dedicated Dialogue on Peace, Security and Defence and a new Dialogue on Energy; launch of a Global Gateway Investment package of EUR 4.7 billion to support mutually beneficial investment projects in the fields of vaccine production, a just energy transition and connectivity infrastructure. Presidents Costa, von der Leyen and Ramaphosa decided to reconvene in the margins of the G20 Summit in Johannesburg in November 2025.

Relations with the SADC further deepened with the organisation of a SADC-EU Ministerial Partnership Dialogue held on 15 March 2025 in Zimbabwe, where the Foreign Minister of Poland represented the High Representative. Both sides reaffirmed their appreciation for their long-standing partnership. The EU's offer of continued engagement with SADC, ensuring predictability and stability in areas such as trade, was particularly well received.

As chair of the African Union from February 2025, **Angola** had a very prominent role in the organisation of the EU-AU Ministerial meeting. The EU and Angola will hold their biennial bilateral Ministerial meeting in 2025. The EU deployed an Election Observation Mission to **Mozambique** general elections on 9 October 2024. Following the post-electoral crisis, the EU played a good offices' role to promote a national dialogue and reconciliation process. The EU continued implementing its "integrated approach" to support the fight against the insurgency in Cabo Delgado, in particular with

the **European Union Military Assistance Mission in Mozambique** (EUMAM in Mozambique) launched in September 2024. EUMAM in Mozambique was set up to ensure that the 1 700 soldiers trained by **European Union Training Mission in Mozambique** (EUTM Mozambique), which fully implemented its mandate, become self-sufficient by June 2026, thus contributing to creating a safer and more secure environment in Cabo Delgado.

The EU attended the Summit of the **Indian Ocean Commission** on 24 April in Madagascar as an observer and key donor. For the first time, the EU was invited to attend the Council of Ministers of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association** on 21 May, as Dialogue Partner.

West Africa

In **West Africa**, the EU continued to pursue its main political objectives to face the challenges and opportunities of the region during this year. The context was marked by the crisis with **Central Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger)** and its impact on the region as well as its population. The EU managed to maintain channels of dialogue open through Delegations and HQ services, namely with the efforts of the newly appointed EU Special Representative for the Sahel (December 2024), who visited the three countries a few months after he took office. After the adaptation of EU instruments and actions following the February 2024 FAC, in 2025 the efforts are focusing on the “**renewed approach to the Sahel**” mentioned in the High Representative Kallas’ mission letter. In this context, the CSDP instruments were significantly scaled down (end of EU Training Mission in Mali and EU Capacity Building Mission Sahel Niger), while **European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali** (EUCAP Sahel Mali) and the **Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell for the Sahel** (RACC) remained in place. The EU autonomous sanction regime framework is still in place for Mali, and for Niger (no individuals listed so far). The situation also worsened in Burkina Faso, in particular on the security and humanitarian side, with the country joining Mali and Niger in a growing authoritarian turn of the transition. Most of the EU instruments and actions, in particular related to security, remain suspended in the three countries.

With several high-level missions or visits (President of the Commission visit to Nouakchott), and as Chair of the African Union, **Mauritania** remained a key partner of the EU in the region, in particular regarding political transitions, security and migration. The EU is also increasingly working on a comprehensive approach on migration issues in the region, which encompasses some of the main countries of origin of irregular migration towards Europe (Senegal, Guinea, Côte d’Ivoire, and Nigeria).

The EU also takes into account the evolution of regional frameworks, in particular **Economic Community of West African States** (ECOWAS), which seems to be in a pivotal year in 2025, now that the three central Sahel countries, which have consolidated further their “**Alliance des Etats du Sahel**” (AES), have left the organisation. After the last EU-ECOWAS ministerial meeting was held in Brussels in February 2023, the EU is working on follow-up actions in several fields, including peace and security, humanitarian affairs or struggle against FIMI.

The spill-over of insecurity towards the **Gulf of Guinea** remains another regional priority, as the pace of attacks in North **Benin** and **Togo** increases. In that context, the partnership with several coastal countries of West Africa has been strengthened. Several CFSP/CSDP tools have been mobilised in

line with the integrated approach adopted in 2022 to help build stability as well as long-term socio-economic development, and address root causes of the conflicts in the region. Alongside the deployment of the **European Union Security and Defence Initiative in the Gulf of Guinea** (EUSDI GoG) mission, several EPF assistance measures adopted in 2024-2025 helped in this regard (**Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Benin** in particular), including in Mauritania alongside the same objectives. Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI) actions were instrumental to ensure an integrated approach with non-kinetic programs related to human security and social cohesion. In 2024, the EU kept responding to emergency humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable populations in the region, with priority to forcibly displaced people, their host communities as well as populations caught in conflict areas. All these challenges are also raised with **Guinea**, with which the EU progressively reengaged after the 2021 coup, but is keeping a cautious approach regarding the slow pace of the transition and the political tensions.

The EU engaged with **Nigeria** to support the assessment and management of the global consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on third countries, and to encourage the regional role of the country, currently Chair of ECOWAS; following contacts between the High Representative and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the next EU-Nigeria ministerial meeting is foreseen for 2025. The EU-**Cabo Verde** ministerial meeting took place in January 2025, followed by the adoption of an ambitious joint communiqué.

Regarding elections in the region, the EU sent **Election Observation Missions** to **Senegal** in 2024, while expert missions covered the presidential election in **Mauritania** (June 2024) and in **Ghana** (December 2024). Beyond these electoral processes, the region is still facing worrying dynamics in terms of governance, democracy and human rights, illustrated by the tensions related to the constitutional reform in **Togo**. In this context, the next elections in **Côte d'Ivoire** and **Guinea-Bissau** will be closely followed. The region also suffered from macro-economic and debt sustainability challenges, while the geopolitical landscape continued to have implications on many countries. Hostile views towards the West are increasing, in a tense geopolitical environment affecting the entire region. This complex and sometimes hostile environment led the EU to adapt its overall political approach, and to work specifically on strategic communication and tackling disinformation and foreign interference.

Regarding **maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea**, the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept helps to address the security challenges affecting freedom of navigation. It has contributed to reducing maritime security incidents and enhanced cooperation with coastal countries.

Central Africa

The EU continued the implementation of the various strands of its **Great Lakes Strategy**, including via support to the regional initiatives to restore peace and security in the eastern part of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**. As part of the Great Lakes Strategy, the High Representative reinstated the position of **EUSR for the Great Lakes** region as of September 2024.

Faced with the escalation of the conflict in Eastern DRC in early 2025, with the rapid advance of the M23 armed group and the Rwanda Army in North and South Kivu provinces of the DRC, the EU condemned the violation of the DRC's territorial integrity, intensified its diplomatic efforts at bilateral

and multilateral level and expanded its restrictive measures against nine individuals and one entity directly responsible for sustaining the conflict or benefiting from it through the illicit exploitation of natural resources.

The EU's two CSDP missions in the **Central African Republic (RCA)** continued to operate. The EU maintained precautions to avoid that its assistance to the authorities, including the training and advice provided by the **European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA)** and the **European Union Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUAM RCA)**, be misused by Wagner-affiliated forces, while continuing to work for the benefit of the population. At the request of the authorities, the two Missions engaged in education, technical and leadership development activities. EUTM RCA was adapted to focus on the military education of young non-commissioned Officers and Officers. This marks an important milestone in providing the FACA with the necessary foundational training for leadership roles. EUAM RCA continued to support the modernization of the Central African Internal Security Forces, and assisted in the drafting of relevant legislation proposals.

The EU supported the difficult transition process in **Chad** and consistently encouraged a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Anglophone regions of **Cameroon**. The EU also supported the ongoing transition process in **Gabon**, including through the deployment of an electoral expert mission for the constitutional referendum in November 2024.

In addition to swiftly transposing any applicable UN sanctions, the EU regularly reviewed and adapted its autonomous restrictive measures against human rights violators, conflict drivers and exploiters in the DRC and Burundi.

East and Horn of Africa

The EU-**Kenya** Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), a pillar of the Strategic Dialogue between the EU and Kenya, entered into force on 1 July 2024. The 1st Ministerial meeting of the EPA Council took place on 12-13 May 2025 together with the second EU-Kenya Business Forum as well as the launch of the new European Chamber of commerce. This agreement and follow-up actions firmly established Kenya as a trade hub for the EU in Eastern Africa. It is helping to boost private sector investments in the country, reinforcing Kenya as a key like-minded partner for the EU, not only in Africa but also globally—notably on issues such as Ukraine and climate change. Regionally, Kenya is engaged on multiple fronts and expects continued EU support, e.g. regarding stabilisation in Somalia and the Nairobi process for Eastern DRC. Regional issues were also covered in the yearly EU-Kenya dialogue on security and defence besides maritime security, counterterrorism, bilateral support via the European Peace Facility, and regular political exchanges on regional dynamics and Kenyan mediation efforts. The EU-Kenya Strategic Dialogue could take place at ministerial level in 2025.

The war in **Sudan** continued to be one of the top EU priorities in Africa—as the world's largest humanitarian and displacement crisis, with famine declared late 2024, and as it threatens to fragment the country and destabilise the entire region. The EU actively engaged in public diplomacy as well as in supporting mediation efforts to find a sustainable and peaceful resolution to the conflict. The EU co-chaired the conference on Sudan organised on 15 April 2025 in London. The EU has also further

continued to work with international accountability mechanisms to bring perpetrators of mass atrocities to justice to end the culture of impunity. During the reporting period, the EU has adopted a third package of restrictive measures against individuals undermining the stability and the political transition of Sudan; it has also prolonged the EU-UN sanctions mixed regime (including an Arms embargo on Darfur) until October 2025. Moreover, together with its Member States, the EU continued to respond to the crisis in Sudan via its humanitarian aid response and by providing development assistance funds.

EU engagement with **Somalia** remained in the framework of the strategic EU-Somalia Joint Operational Roadmap adopted in 2023. In April 2025, an EU-Somalia Political Dialogue was held to take stock of the roadmap's implementation. On the security side, UN Security Council Resolution 2767 was adopted in December 2024, establishing a new African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia, and requesting that the mission be financed under UN Security Council Resolution 2719 (2023). The EU has engaged in support of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2719 (2023) to finance the mission. Through its two CSDP missions, the **European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia** (EUCAP Somalia) and the **European Union Training Mission Somalia** (EUTM Somalia), the EU continues to provide training and advice to the Somali security forces, both military and federal police, as well as to the legislative structures to restore and deliver security in the country. **European Union Naval Force Operation ATALANTA** continues to engage off Somalia's coast to counter piracy and illicit trafficking and to strengthen maritime security in the region.

Ethiopia remained a key strategic partner for the EU in the Horn of Africa and more broadly on the continent. The EU strengthened its relations with Ethiopia via two rounds of Structured Dialogue that took place in December 2023 and December 2024. The EU remained a key partner in Ethiopia's development, supporting sectors like infrastructure, education, and governance.

In **South Sudan**, the EU continued to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement. However, since the breakout of the latest internal hostilities, the European Union is closely monitoring the situation and engaging in public diplomacy with the message that differences should be solved through peaceful means, based on the Peace Agreement.

In **Eritrea**, EEAS Managing Director for Africa visited Asmara in April 2025 to review the bilateral relations. This was the first official HQ visit since 2019.

Asia-Pacific

The implementation of the **2021 EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific** has helped raise the profile of the EU in the region. Hosting regular Ministerial level Forums has been an important element (Paris 2022, Stockholm 2023, and Brussels 2024). While pursuing the implementation of the seven priority areas of the Strategy, a focus on the security aspects, including in economic terms, was necessary to manage the interlinking crises and to navigate the current geopolitical trends.

While no **EU-Japan** Summit took place in 2024, a large number of high-level consultations underlined again the deep and dynamic strategic partnership between the EU and Japan, in the face of unprecedented global challenges to peace and stability. Similarly, while no **EU-Republic of Korea**

Summit took place in 2024, relations with the Republic of Korea and our strategic partnership continued to strengthen. The High Representative visited Tokyo and Seoul in November 2024 to hold the first Strategic Dialogue with the Japanese and Republic of Korea Foreign Ministers, and to adopt Security and Defence Partnerships with both countries. The second EU-Japan Strategic Dialogue took place in April 2025 in Brussels. Exchanges with **Australia** on foreign and security issues continued to grow, as well as on climate, energy, environment and critical raw materials. While communication on the feasibility of resuming free trade area negotiations took place, additional mechanisms were used to discuss trade issues and economic security. **New Zealand** continued to be one of the most like-minded partners for the EU. The FTA entered into force in May 2024, and in other fields has been followed by enhanced cooperation on maritime security, police data sharing and exploratory talks on space cooperation. The EU continued deepening its ties with **India**, rooted in the new strategic agenda with India announced in President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines for the European Commission 2024-2029. The unprecedented visit to Delhi by the College of Commissioners in February 2025 underlined the scope for closer cooperation, including on economic growth, technology and security and defence. The convening of the second ministerial-level Trade and Technology Council during the visit, and the continuing negotiations towards the conclusion of a Free Trade Agreement, are further key contributions to fulfilling the strategic agenda. EU relations with the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** (ASEAN) continued to advance, building on the success of the 2022 EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit and 2024's EU-ASEAN Ministerial in Brussels. The EU-ASEAN Plan of Action to Implement the Strategic Partnership (2023-27) was taken forward. Timor-Leste will become the 11th ASEAN member during the 47th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur in October 2025.

Concerning bilateral relations with ASEAN Member States, relations with ASEAN's largest member, **Indonesia**, have made encouraging strides, taking into account the power transition in Jakarta. The EU revived a bilateral Human Rights Dialogue, and made progress in fostering closer people-to-people ties. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with **Malaysia** was signed in the margins of the EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit 2022 and its ratification is ongoing, while the PCA with **Thailand** has been provisionally applied as of October 2024 in the follow-up of its ratification by the Thai parliament. Talks started in 2024 to upgrade the EU-**Vietnam** partnership to a higher level against the backdrop of increased cooperation in trade and energy transition. In May 2024, the EU signed the first stand-alone Digital Trade Agreement with **Singapore**, putting the EU and Singapore at the global forefront of digital policy development while upholding open and fair digital economies. The EEAS has continued to follow up on the mutual commitments made during the first visit of the President of the Commission to the Philippines (2023), including enhancing maritime cooperation, cybersecurity, and countering hybrid threats. Human rights and governance remained key topics. The EU worked closely with the **Lao** ASEAN Chair to address the situation in **Myanmar**. Following the 2021 military coup, the Council continued to extend its targeted sanctions against those responsible for the coup and for the suppression of democracy, as well as against entities that provide financial and other support to the military regime. The EU continued to support ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus to address the Myanmar crisis, and deepened its engagement with the National Unity Government and other anti-coup stakeholders. The EU continued to implement the decision on temporary and partial withdrawal of so-called 'Everything but Arms' trade

preferences from **Cambodia** due to serious human rights concerns. The EU continued to pursue its multifaceted approach towards **China**, which comprises elements of engagement, competition and rivalry. China's support for Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine remained at the core of exchanges with China: the EU repeatedly urged China to stop supporting Russia's military industrial base and adopted export controls and sanctions targeting Chinese companies. The EU also continued to raise its concerns about structural imbalances in the trade and economic relations with China, while also explaining the implementation of its de-risking approach and its economic security policy. At the same time, the EU preserved the space for constructive engagement with China, especially on key global challenges such as climate change. Throughout the past year, the EU repeatedly expressed concerns about growing tensions across the Taiwan Strait, as well as in the South China Sea, calling for dialogue and restraint.

Relations with **Taiwan** continued to develop in line with the EU's One China Policy and the importance of Taiwan as an economic partner, with an emphasis on the importance of opposing any unilateral changes to the status quo. The EU expressed concerns about the erosion of fundamental freedoms and of autonomy in **Hong Kong**, referring in particular to the continued implementation of the National Security Law, and continued to observe national security trials.

The EU engaged closely with the interim government in **Bangladesh**, including on reforms ahead of parliamentary elections expected by June 2026. The first full round of negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement took place in April 2025. The EEAS also continued, with the European Commission, to monitor respect for labour and wider human rights conditions linked to the preferential trade schemes benefiting several partners in **South Asia**, notably Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The EU supported the democratic process in **Sri Lanka** by fielding an Election Observation Mission and Election Expert Mission to observe Presidential and general elections respectively, and continued supporting the country's sustainable economic recovery and reforms. The **Maldives'** signature of the EU- Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Agreement (Samoa Agreement) enhanced the bilateral partnership as well as regional integration. The visit to Brussels by Prime Minister Tobgay of **Bhutan** in January 2025 helped to cement EU-Bhutan relations in their 40th anniversary year.

The partnership with **Mongolia** continued to develop under the EU-Mongolia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, with a focus on support to reforms, economic development and green transition.

The EU continued to engage with **Pakistan** on counterterrorism issues, notably following the May 2025 military confrontation between Pakistan and India. Several bilateral meetings and dialogues at different levels took place with Pakistan, to discuss all aspects of bilateral relations in the framework of the Cooperation Agreement and the Strategic Engagement Plan, including human rights, trade relations, sustainable development, migration and security issues.

The EU has continued to use all means to condemn the continuous backsliding on human rights in **Afghanistan** and to advocate for these restrictions to be lifted. The EU remains committed to providing humanitarian and basic-needs assistance to the Afghan people along a principled approach, supporting women and girls, without recognizing the Taliban *de-facto* authorities. The EEAS

continued to engage with the Taliban-appointed interim government in line with the 2021 and 2023 Council Conclusions and supported the UN-led political process (so-called Doha process). The EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan continued engaging with partners from Central Asia.

Following the signature of the Samoa Agreement in November 2023, the EU continued to be a significant partner to the **Pacific Island Countries** through development, trade and regular political engagement at various levels. The EU Interim Economic Partnership Agreement was extended with Tonga and Tuvalu in 2024. EU projects under the Global Europe and Global Gateway programmes progressed in their implementation in full alignment with the priorities of the 2050 Strategy of the Blue Pacific Continent (economic development; climate change; oceans and environment; people; technology and connectivity; peace and security). In general, Pacific Island Countries continued to be reliable partners of the EU in supporting the multilateral rules-based international system.

Americas

The United States and Canada

Engagement with the **United States** continued to be a major priority for the EU in 2024, leading into 2025. The relationship has been evolving in response to the changes in the US administration and policies starting in January 2025.

Intense and regular contacts continued to take place between EU and US counterparts.

In the aftermath of President Trump's inauguration on 20 January, European Commission President Von der Leyen and High Representative Kallas met US Vice President Vance in February 2025 in Paris. The High Representative travelled to Washington D.C. in February. She has also met with US Secretary of State Rubio in the margins of events such as the Munich Security Conference, G7 and NATO Foreign Ministers meetings. Several members of the College have visited Washington D.C., including Commissioner for Trade Šefčovič on several occasions.

2024 and early 2025 also saw the successful continuation of the EU-US Emerging Leaders Programme, which facilitates visits by young US leaders to Brussels and the Member States on specialised topics; this is one of many ongoing people-to-people initiatives by the EU targeting US interlocutors.

In coming months, the EU will continue to take a pragmatic approach to its partnership with the US, balancing cooperation wherever possible and the defence of our interests and values when necessary.

Relations between the EU and **Canada** have continued to grow, thanks to regular and in-depth engagements with Canada—bilaterally, through the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) and in the framework of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and in multilateral fora (G7, G20 and NATO), with Canada holding the G7 presidency in 2025. In 2024 and early 2025, work has continued on the implementation of the flagship initiatives agreed at the 2023 EU-Canada Summit, in particular under the Green Alliance and Digital Partnership.

High Representative Kallas held bilateral meetings with Foreign Minister Joly in February 2025 in Brussels, and in the margins of the G7 Ministerial Meeting in Charlevoix in March 2025 focusing on Ukraine and the Middle East. The EU-Canada Leaders' Meeting in Brussels in February 2025,

between outgoing Prime Minister Trudeau, President Costa, and President von der Leyen, focused on promoting global economic security and stability, and diversifying trade. The commitments made to EU-Canada cooperation in these areas were renewed in an April call between new Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and President von der Leyen, with additional attention given to EU-Canada security and defence ties.

The EU-Canada Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) and EU-Canada High-Level Consultations in Ottawa in March 2025 provided an opportunity to review and consolidate the various strands of cooperation, including a strong focus on the contributions that both the EU and Canada are making on Ukraine and security and defence. The JCC Report on the State of Canada-European Union Relations (March 2023 to February 2025) provides comprehensive insight into all ongoing EU-Canada cooperation.

The EU-Canada Summit will take place on 23 June in Brussels. It will provide the opportunity to showcase our like-mindedness and the strength of our partnership, while advancing on concrete deliverables, among which the potential signature of a Security and Defence Partnership.

EU-Latin America and Caribbean relations

The EU implemented and operationalised the commitments resulting from the EU-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit that took place in Brussels in July 2023, the Joint Communication “New Agenda for EU-LAC Relations” (June 2023) and the Council Conclusions on EU-LAC Relations (November 2023). In order to give continuity to our relations at senior-official level, the EU-CELAC consultative coordination mechanism was launched in May 2024 in Tegucigalpa (Honduras). This was one of the commitments of the 2023 EU-CELAC Summit.

In September 2024, for the first time, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU and CELAC held a meeting during the High-level week of the United Nations General Assembly, publicly renewing their commitment to the bi-regional partnership and the CELAC-EU Summit foreseen in 2025 and to the ambitious implementation of the ‘Pact for the Future’. A new EU-CELAC Ministerial meeting will take place in September at the margins of UNGA to prepare the Summit.

On 6 March 2025, Ministers of Interior and Security from the European Union and Latin America met in Brussels to reinforce cooperation in tackling global security challenges. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a Joint Declaration and a Roadmap for Operational Cooperation Priorities 2025-2026, marking a significant step forward in EU-Latin American Committee on Internal Security (CLASI) collaboration.

Progress was made on the implementation of our partnership as the EU and CELAC were taking forward the bi-regional Roadmap of events covering the period 2023-2025, with events and initiatives in a wide range of sectors, including high-level dialogues within the Digital Alliance, a strategic framework to foster substantial bi-regional cooperation across the full spectrum of digital and space issues. Other important milestones were the signature of the EU-LAC Memorandum of Understanding on Disaster Risk Management and Preparedness, and the launch of the Team Europe Initiative on Equitable and Inclusive Societies, which is part of an investment strategy to facilitate access to social rights and basic social services, enhance inclusive, accountable and transparent institutions, and foster social innovation, resilience and just transitions. A High-level meeting of the

CELAC-EU Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs with a new five-years strategy, annual meetings of climate and environment-related programmes (Euroclima, Amazonia +) as well as Senior Official Meetings on internal security and justice cooperation also took place in this time period. The EU stepped up consultations with LAC ambassadors in key multilateral fora (New York, Geneva, Vienna, and Rome) to strengthen the well-established cooperation with GRULAC and forge cooperation on important issues and in defence of multilateralism. The EU continued to support the EU-LAC Foundation, which organised activities involving civil society and other social actors from both regions.

Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean

The EU continued to engage with **Mexico**, through high-level visits and a wide range of political and sectoral dialogues. Former High Representative Borrell participated in the inauguration of President Sheinbaum in October 2024 and Executive Vice President of the Commission Teresa Ribera visited Mexico in April 2025. The last Dialogue on Multilateral Affairs took place in May 2024 and the last High Level Political Dialogue took place in Brussels on May 21st 2025. The annual Human Rights Dialogue was held in Brussels in December 2024 and the Climate and Environment Dialogues in Mexico City in February 2025. The EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee took place in Brussels in May 2025. Negotiations for a Modernised Global Agreement covering political, cooperation and trade/investment relations were concluded in January 2025.

On 1 May 2024, the EU Association Agreement with **Central America** entered into force, following the completion of ratification procedures and replacing the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement. The full entry into force of the agreement elevates the level of the political dialogue with the region up to Ministerial level. It is designed to support economic growth, democracy and political stability in Central America and foster collaboration on a wide variety of issues of common interest. The first EU Central America Association Council should take place this year.

As part of its support to democracy in the region, and following attempts to undermine the outcome of the Presidential vote in **Guatemala**, the EU established a sanctions regime in January 2024 to hold accountable those obstructing the country's democratic transition and undermining democracy. A number of individual sanctions have been adopted since. High Representative Borrell attended President Arévalo's inauguration on 15 January 2024. The two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding on bilateral consultations on the occasion of President Arévalo's visit to Brussels in February, and the first bilateral consultations took place in May 2024. President Arévalo also met with European Council President Michel during this visit. In February 2025, EU Special Representative for Human Rights visited the country, recognising the strong commitment of the government to a positive and ambitious national agenda, with clear focus on good governance, transparency, inclusion, and respect for human rights. Bilateral consultations with **Honduras** took place in May 2024, and an exploratory mission was deployed in May 2025 to assess the feasibility of the deployment of an EU Electoral Observation Mission for the presidential elections in November 2025. In October 2024, in view of the situation in **Nicaragua**, the Council renewed the EU's existing restrictive measures on 21 individuals and three entities responsible for serious human rights violations or abuses, for the repression of civil society and democratic opposition, or for undermining democracy and the rule of law in the country. In February 2025, the EU held the 8th round of bilateral

consultations with **Costa Rica**, under the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2009. These and the meeting between High Representative Kallas and Costa Rica Foreign Minister André Tinoco in March 2025, further reinforced EU-Costa Rica ties, emphasizing security and migration, support to multilateralism as well as the fight against climate change, trade and investment agendas as main areas of cooperation.

In 2024, the EU has maintained its political engagement with the **Caribbean** as a distinct sub-regional bloc. Former Commissioner Urpilainen attended the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Conference in Antigua and Barbuda in 2024, and Commissioner Lenarčič undertook a mission to Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago in 2024 to sign an EU-LAC Memorandum of Understanding on Disaster Risk Management. In February 2025, European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen attended the 48th regular meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), engaging with the 15 Caribbean leaders. On 1 January 2024, the EU-OACPS (Samoa) Agreement entered into force, elevating the level of our political engagement with the region through its dedicated EU-Caribbean regional protocol.

The EU continued to pursue its critical engagement towards **Cuba** under the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement. Following the Political Dialogue on Human Rights of November 2023, an essential matter in the EU's dealings with Cuba, a series of dialogues were held in April 2024 (Political Dialogues on Unilateral Coercive Measures and on Sustainable Development; Cooperation Subcommittee; and Sectoral Dialogues on Energy, Agriculture, and Environment and Climate change). In early October 2024, Political Dialogues on Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and on Illegal Trade of Small Arms and Light/Conventional weapons were held.

The deteriorating and multifaceted crisis in **Haiti** is clearly unsustainable and its regional impact should not be underestimated. The EU remains engaged both politically and in terms of humanitarian, development and stabilisation assistance. As part of the latter, the EU has approved a EUR 10 million contribution to support the Kenyan-led Multinational Security Support Mission, as authorized by the UN Security Council in October 2023. Negotiations are ongoing with the Organisation of American States to facilitate the disbursement in line with FPI rules before the end of 2025.

South America

After more than 20 years of negotiations, the conclusion of the **EU-Mercosur Agreement** in December 2024 was a historic milestone. It is not only a trade agreement but also a geopolitical building block that lays the foundation for trust and an institutional framework to foster cooperation from human rights and sustainable development to digital economy regulation and combating organised crime.

The renewed and strengthened dynamism of relations with **Brazil**, a strategic partner, continued over 2024. This was well reflected in the numerous EU political visits to Brazil and the launching of several new sectoral dialogues in key areas of common interest. The last High Level Political Dialogue was held in March in Brussels. The EU has been working closely with Brazil to ensure the success of the next EU-Brazil Summit planned for 2025—the first Summit since 2014.

Following the signature of the **EU-Chile Advanced Framework Agreement** in December 2023, the Interim Trade Agreement entered into force in February 2024 and the provisional application of the comprehensive agreement started in June 2025.

Strategic cooperation with **Argentina and Uruguay** has also been enlarged to new priority areas with the implementation of Memoranda of Understanding on energy and critical raw materials with Argentina. The EU is also exploring the possibility to extend cooperation with **Bolivia** in the areas of critical raw materials and renewable energy.

On **Venezuela**, the EU continues to work with Venezuelans, regional and international partners to foster dialogue and a democratic way out of the crisis led by Venezuelans. In 2024, the EEAS engaged actively to help efforts for a democratic presidential election in July. Following the election – with results that remain unverified and cannot be recognised as representative of the will of the people, as well as increased political repression and human rights violations – the EU adopted additional targeted individual sanctions while pursuing targeted engagement with the institutions and with political and civil society actors to address concerns and facilitate meaningful dialogue on human rights and the transition to democracy.

The EU has been steadily strengthening its relationship with **Colombia**, including through work towards a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Strong political and financial support to the ongoing peace process, notably the implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement, remains key in our partnership with the country. The EU continues to work with government and civil society to help consolidate peace. The EU provides support to social justice efforts, protection of the environment, combatting the illegal economy, putting an end to violence and supporting reconciliation.

The EU continues to support democracy and an inclusive and sustainable economic growth in **Ecuador, Peru and Paraguay**. An EU Electoral Observation Mission was deployed for the general elections in Ecuador from December 2024 to April 2025. In view of the increasing security challenges in these countries, the EU has been strengthening cooperation with and assistance to the authorities in their fights against organised crime.

EU Special Representatives (EUSRs)

Eleven Special Representatives provided the EU with an active political presence in key areas: four EUSRs in the European neighbourhood (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues, South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia), three on the African continent (Sahel, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes), two in Asia and the wider Middle East (Central Asia, Middle East Peace Process, the Gulf region), as well as one EUSR with a thematic mandate (Human Rights). Over the past year, under the leadership of the High Representative, EUSRs have played an active role in diffusing tensions and contributing to peace and stability. The EEAS and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments continued to collaborate to strengthen the general handling of the instrument in the context of an effective and cost-efficient CFSP.

Iran

The EU continued to implement a comprehensive policy approach vis-à-vis Iran, considering all options at its disposal, critical where necessary and ready to engage, on the basis of mutual respect, where interests align. Within this framework, the diplomatic channels were kept open, which was useful to follow the EU's interests. In this regard, the EU monitored the presidential elections as well as the posture of the new president and government in fields of interest for the EU (military support to Russia, regional destabilisation, human rights and EU detainees, nuclear path). Although not part of the reporting period, it is worth noting that following Israeli strike on Iran (June) and the Iran's response a new cycle of violence began⁴.

As regards Iran's support to Russia's war of aggression, in September 2024, the EU strongly condemned the transfer of Iranian-made ballistic missiles to Russia which represented a substantial escalation and a direct threat to European security. In October and November 2024, the Council adopted new and significant restrictive measures in line with the European Council tasking.

The EU condemned in the strongest terms the second Iranian drone and missile attack against Israel on 1 October 2024, as a serious threat to regional security. The EU continued to use its direct channels with Iran to pass messages of restraint in all regional scenarios and to urge Iran to use its influence on certain groups in the region to prevent further escalation.

The EU followed closely the human rights situation in the country and strongly deplored the alarming pace of executions, which included the execution of an EU citizen (October 2024) and a protester (August 2024), urging Iran to establish a moratorium on the death penalty. The EU urged Iran to stop its distressing practice of arbitrarily detaining EU citizens. The Council decided in April 2025 to impose restrictive measures on an additional seven individuals and two entities responsible for serious human rights violations in Iran, including the use of the judiciary as a tool for arbitrary detention. The EU also contributed to accountability by supporting the UN international Fact Finding Mission and the UN Special Rapporteur. Furthermore, the EU continued to co-sponsor the annual UN Canada-led resolution on the human rights situation in Iran.

The High Representative, as coordinator of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Joint Commission, continued to be in touch with all relevant parties and the US to preserve space for a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear programme, which is expanding at an alarming rate.

⁴ The Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on Israel/Iran of 14 June 2025 and the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council of 17 June 2025 on Israel/Iran reflect the latest EU policy positions on that matter.

(2) GLOBAL ISSUES

In 2024, the EEAS pursued three overarching objectives on the global agenda and multilateral relations:

- i) to stand up for rules-based multilateralism, international law (incl. International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law), accountability, human rights and democracy;
- ii) to enhance EU resilience and economic security through the external dimension of EU thematic policies and amplifying a positive narrative in support of EU policies;
- iii) to address the geopolitical consequences of conflicts and leveraging Global Gateway investment and Financing for Development in a Team Europe approach.

In its efforts to further strengthen multilateralism, the EEAS actively promoted global governance and defended a strong, rules-based international order. The EU actively worked on the adoption of the UN Global Digital Compact (GDC), along with the Declaration for Future Generations, adopted as annexes to the Pact of the Future. Within the G20, the EEAS coordinated the EU's position and led negotiations on the Call to Action on Global Governance Reform—an initiative of Brazil's 2024 Presidency—the endorsement of which marks a step toward a more representative and effective multilateral system. The EU strongly supported the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent G20 member and worked closely with the South African Presidency.

In the area of **global health**, the EU played a key role in the successful negotiations and adoption of the WHO Pandemic Agreement at the World Health Assembly on 20 May 2025, a major achievement for multilateral action. The agreement aims at preventing future pandemics and strengthening the international community's readiness to respond to emerging health threats. Meanwhile, the implementation of the **Global Health Strategy** advanced through multilateral cooperation.

The EEAS contributed to shaping the EU's **foreign economic policy**, structured around the three pillars of economic security, trade, and partnerships. It supported the development of strategic, mutually beneficial partnerships, e.g. the **Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships**—the first being developed with South Africa, and the advancement of trade agreements and international trade more broadly. In line with the Joint Communication on European Economic Security, the EEAS enhanced its role in assessing and mitigating economic security risks and deploying autonomous instruments, including Trade Defence Instruments and the EU Foreign Direct Investment Screening Mechanism. The EEAS launched efforts to strengthen engagement with EU Delegations on economic security. Ongoing work includes better leveraging tools such as the Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) toolbox to bolster EU economic security.

Progress continued on improving the **EU financial market and tax framework**, supporting multilateral cooperation on anti-money laundering (AML) and countering the financing of terrorism, including contributions to the EU AML list of high-risk third countries and defining the EU list of Non-Cooperative Jurisdictions for tax purposes.

In the area of **digital diplomacy**, the EU-LAC Digital Alliance advanced, with participation from 22 LAC member countries by the end of 2024. In December 2024, the EU and the Smart Africa Alliance deepened collaboration to close Africa's digital divide by signing an Administrative Arrangement and a grant agreement under the Global Gateway strategy.

The mainstreaming of the **green transition** in foreign policy remained a central focus throughout 2024. The EEAS supported outreach efforts on the EU Deforestation Regulation, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, the Water Resilience Initiative, and the UN High Seas Treaty. In the lead-up to COP29 in Baku, outreach focused on climate finance targets and promoting global initiatives like "No New Coal." The EEAS continued supporting implementation of the Global Methane Pledge and the Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETP), advancing the Vietnam partnership. In March 2024, the Council adopted Conclusions on Green Diplomacy.

To address the **geopolitical impacts of Russia's war** of aggression against Ukraine, the EEAS pursued global engagement to secure **energy** sector support and coordinated EU contributions to the G7+ group on Ukraine's energy security. The EEAS also assisted in strengthening EU energy security, including support for the AggregateEU natural gas demand aggregation mechanism. On the broader impact of the war, the EEAS continued to implement the **Action Plan on the global consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on third countries**.

The EEAS provided expertise and organisational support to multiple dialogues with partners on **home affairs and migration policies**. It contributed to strategic discussions on drug control, especially in Latin America and the Western Balkans, and held migration dialogues with partner countries. The EEAS helped build a comprehensive approach to the external dimension of migration. In the context of the Visa Code process, it led outreach to third countries on return and readmission cooperation and contributed to early initiatives to enhance EU cooperation with third countries in justice.

Food security and nutrition remained central to geopolitical and geo-economic dynamics following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. On 16 December 2024, the EEAS supported the adoption of Council Conclusions setting out an EU roadmap for a comprehensive approach to food security and nutrition. Leveraging its network of EU Delegations, the EEAS secured strong Team Europe participation and pledges at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Paris on 27–28 March 2025.

The EU maintained support for ambitious **reform of the global financial architecture**, including multilateral development banks. The EEAS participated in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund Annual Meetings. On 26 May 2025, the Council adopted Conclusions on financing for development, ahead of the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in Spain, focusing on resilience building through EU external action.

The EEAS has actively contributed to the preparatory work for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), ensuring that external action priorities are reflected in future EU funding allocations.

On 31 October, the EEAS concluded the Mid-Term Review of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-GE) covering Sub-Saharan Africa, LAC and Asia and the Pacific for 2025–2027. The review enables the EU to meet shared priorities and objectives, as agreed with partner countries at Summits such as EU-AU, EU-CELAC, and EU-

ASEAN, while supporting faster progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. It also underscores the EU's commitment to continued engagement in **fragile** and conflict-affected countries.

The budgetary guarantee of the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) remains the EU's largest risk-sharing mechanism for priority investments outside the Union, aimed at maximising contributions to the Global Gateway. Nearly EUR 10 billion in EFSD+ guarantees have been provided to implementing partners for private sector projects within an 'open architecture' framework, including in least developed and fragile countries. Investments totalling EUR 179 billion from 2021 to 2023 were mobilised, remaining on course to reach the EUR 300 billion target by 2027.

Values and Multilateral Relations

The EU remained a strong and reliable defender of **effective multilateralism**. Over the reporting period, the EU's engagement in multilateral fora was guided by its commitment to securing an ambitious and consensus-based outcome at the 2024 UN Summit of the Future. The Summit culminated in the successful adoption by consensus of the **Pact for the Future** and its annexes – the Global Digital Compact – that enshrines principles for an open, secure and human rights-based digital future, and the Declaration on Future Generations that sets the stage for enhanced policy foresight and anticipatory governance.

The EU played a central role in the negotiation process, building bridges with key groups, including G77 and the African countries in particular. The successful outcome of the Summit reaffirmed the international community's broad commitment to strengthening multilateral cooperation. Among **key achievements** are: new language on Security Council reform, new commitments on funding for human rights mechanisms, and a high level of ambition on reforming the international financial architecture. Furthermore, the Pact reflects a balanced approach among the three pillars of the UN—peace and security, human rights, and development—an objective consistently promoted by the EU throughout the negotiations.

The EU remained active in supporting the UN Secretary-General's **New Agenda for Peace**, with particular emphasis on prevention, national strategies, and peace operations reform. These issues were successfully included in the Pact. The EU also sustained its engagement on other global priorities, including climate and environment, cybersecurity, and the responsible use of emerging technologies.

The EU maintained its strong **support for democracy** worldwide with a focus on reinforcing parliamentary capacities, fostering youth and women's participation, and promoting pluralistic and independent media. Through the Team Europe Democracy initiative, which brings together EU institutions and 14 Member States for a coordinated strategic European response in support of democracy, targeted assistance for democratic reforms was provided in 7 countries across Central America, Africa and Western Asia. The European Endowment for Democracy offered crucial support to pro-democracy actors, civil society, and independent media in challenging and repressive contexts across the EU neighbourhood, the Western Balkans, Türkiye, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

The EU also reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding electoral integrity through election observation, in response to growing concerns over democratic backsliding and authoritarian trends. In 2024, it deployed 20 electoral missions, including full-scale Election Observation Missions

(EOMs) to Jordan, Mozambique, Senegal, and Sri Lanka, adapting to the specific context of each election and contributing to the efforts to address corresponding challenges or to support positive achievements. Between January and May 2025, the EU deployed six missions, including EOMs to Kosovo, Ecuador, and the Philippines.

The EU has continued to make use of the full range of its **human rights** and democracy instruments and tools to uphold and promote human rights across the world, delivering on the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 that on 27 May 2024 was extended until 2027. A dedicated report by the High Representative detailing EU assessment and policies in this area “2024 Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world”, was published in May 2025.

Through close collaboration with civil society organisations, human rights defenders, and international partners, the EU has continued to empower people on the frontlines of human rights advocacy. Over 10 050 at-risk defenders received support through the ProtectDefenders.eu mechanism in 2024 alone. The Team Europe approach has further strengthened collective action, leveraging resources such as the NDICI-Global Europe financial framework, which allocates nearly EUR 80 billion through to 2027 to advance human rights and democracy. The EU conducted bilateral human rights dialogues with 36 countries and international organisations in 2024, and further 12 such dialogues in the first five months of 2025, engaging with partners from all regions. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights continued to promote EU human rights foreign policy, as well as compliance with international humanitarian law and support to international criminal justice, working under the authority of the High Representative. In the UN human rights fora, the EU continued leading on initiatives on the rights of the child, climate change and freedom of religion of belief, and addressed human rights violations in Afghanistan, Belarus, Burundi, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Eritrea, and Myanmar, among others.

The EU updated its Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), to strengthen protection and prevent grave violations against children in times of war: (i) killing and maiming; (ii) recruitment and use as soldiers or in other non-combat roles; (iii) abductions; (iv) rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence; (v) attacks on schools and hospitals; and (vi) the denial of humanitarian access. Alongside the guidelines, the EU introduced an updated checklist for the integration of protection of children affected by armed conflict by EU crisis management operations under the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy.

Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security

The EEAS kept **gender equality** and **Women, Peace and Security (WPS)** high on the agenda in EU external action, driving coordination through the **WPS Taskforce**, securing extension of the EU WPS Action Plan to 2027 and strong WPS commitments as part of all new security and defence partnerships signed during the reporting period. The EU also promoted WPS and gender equality in the **G7**, in **EU-NATO** and **EU-UN** partnerships, through active engagements at global forums and by facilitating structural dialogue and regular engagement with civil society.

Promoting **gender-responsive leadership (GRL)** is a key tool. In partnership with the Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Gender and Diversity Taskforce delivered GRL trainings (reaching 86% of

senior managers in HQ). To strategically build a sustainable institutional gender architecture, SG.GD created and coordinates a network of **Gender Experts** and **Gender Focal Points** in 73 Divisions of the EEAS.

The **Istanbul Task Force** (ITF) was set up in January 2024 to create a safe, equitable and inclusive working environment at the EEAS. Its implementation is ongoing.

Diversity and Inclusion

In 2024, the EEAS continued the implementation of the **EEAS Diversity and Inclusion Agenda** and supported the organisation of initiatives related to **internal diversity**. Concerning **external implementation**, the EEAS focused on **mainstreaming non-discrimination** into CFSP documents, **civil society engagement** and **multilateral engagement** with governments, parliamentarians and CSOs, notably on topics such as **gender** and **LGBTIQ equality**. The EEAS Ambassador for Equality addressed for the first time the **Religion and Diplomacy** advisors of Member States on the intersection of religion and diplomacy with gender equality and rights of LGBTIQ persons.

Strategic Communications

In 2024 and 2025, the EU continued to step up its efforts to confront the persistent threat posed by **Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI)**. Foreign threat actors, such as Russia but also China, continued with attempts to manipulate and interfere in the information space to undermine democracy in Europe and around the world. Following the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, the EEAS refined its approach to countering FIMI by strengthening the EU FIMI Toolbox along all four pillars of action—situational awareness, resilience building, regulation and disruption as well as the EU’s external action.

The EEAS worked with EU institutions, Member States, international partners, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders in advancing a whole-of-society approach to prevent, deter and respond to FIMI. The EEAS continued the efforts to build more effective and collective responses to FIMI threats, including under the **G7 Rapid Response Mechanism (G7 RRM)**, in collaboration with civil society through the **FIMI Information Sharing and Analysis Center**, and the EU Rapid Alert System with EU Member States and institutions. Recognising the global nature of the security threat, the EEAS’ leverage established dialogues and cooperation with like-minded and international partner countries.

In December 2024, the EU imposed restrictive measures against 16 individuals and 3 entities responsible for Russia's hybrid activities abroad, including FIMI, under the newly adopted sanction framework in response to Russia's destabilising actions. In May 2025, the EU listed further 21 individuals and 6 entities under this regime. The scope has been broadened to allow the EU to target tangible assets linked to Russia’s destabilising activities, such as vessels, aircraft, real estate, and physical elements of digital and communication networks, as well as transactions of credit institutions, financial institutions and entities providing crypto-assets services that directly or indirectly facilitate Russia’s destabilising activities.

In February 2025, High Representative Kallas presented the third EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats. The report provided an overview of data-driven analysis of trends observed across 750 FIMI incidents linked to foreign actors, namely Russia and China, while also presenting a framework to assist efforts in exposing and attributing FIMI operations. It revealed the digital infrastructure put into place by threat actors to conduct FIMI operations, highlighting the strategic use of both overt state-aligned media and covert inauthentic networks. In November 2024, the EEAS presented a report on identity-based FIMI, which revealed how foreign actors systematically exploit identity to inflame societal tensions and weaken democratic discourse. The report empowered the FIMI defender community, with a practical guide on how to conduct open source investigations on related FIMI attacks.

The EEAS continued efforts to reinforce the **Rapid Alert System (RAS)**, the EU's primary coordination network for sharing information to advance coordinated responses to FIMI with EU Member State and institutions. The RAS played a central role in monitoring FIMI around elections and response efforts across multiple national and regional elections in 2024 and 2025, including the 2024 June European Elections, enabling timely exchange of threat information exchange and coordinated messaging. Close coordination between the EEAS, the European Parliament and the European Commission in a tripartite format was key to ensure the integrity of the European Elections.

The **EUvsDisinfo platform** continued to be a key awareness-raising tool, reaching an audience of over 38 million with evidence-based analysis of disinformation campaigns—especially those originating from Russia, China, and other authoritarian actors. The website remains the world's largest public database of pro-Kremlin disinformation cases, which counts to date 19,000 exposed and debunked disinformation cases.

The EEAS led efforts to develop a **G7 Collective Framework for Countering Foreign Threats to Democratic Information Ecosystems**, in the context of G7 RRM. This framework underpins structured cooperation and alignment among G7 members on counter-FIMI measures.

In 2024, the EEAS fulfilled the Strategic Compass mandate and has successfully equipped all CSDP missions and operations with analytical tools to detect, analyse and respond to FIMI in their areas of operation. In addition to analytical support and dedicated trainings, the EEAS has strengthened strategic communications capabilities of CSDP missions and operations and started to provide dedicated support during crisis.

Public diplomacy and communication campaigns

The EEAS expanded its regional engagement, through its regional **Strategic Communication (StratCom) Task Forces** dedicated to the Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans, the Middle East and Northern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa. The Sub-Saharan Africa StratCom Task Force deepened cooperation with partners across the continent, while support for Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and countries in the Western Balkans, MENA and Central Asia regions was reinforced through tailored strategic communication and capacity-building initiatives. Key initiatives included the “Life under Occupation” campaign in May-June 2025, portraying the challenges of Ukrainians living under illegal Russian occupation, tailored for audiences in Latin America and Africa. The annual “Europeans in

Action” campaign also reinforced the EU’s engagement and commitment with the Western Balkan region. Efforts helped strengthen local resilience, support independent media, and empower civil society and fact-checking communities.

In response to internationally expanding FIMI operations, the EEAS deepened its global anti-FIMI network, connecting journalists and fact-checkers worldwide to exchange expertise and strengthen resilience. A key milestone was the “Connecting Media Communities” event, hosted by the EEAS in October 2024 in Pristina, Kosovo. The event brought together over 130 journalists, media experts, and representatives of international organizations to address the challenges of FIMI in today’s media landscape.

Crisis Response Centre

The **EEAS Crisis Response Centre (CRC)** continued to work on the EU’s response to external crises, notably in the Middle East (including Lebanon and Syria), the Sahel (Niger) or the Great Lakes region (including eastern Democratic Republic of Congo), in close coordination with Member States and the Commission. In the continuing difficult context of external crises, the CRC has consolidated its capability to provide early warning and situational awareness through the **EU Situation Room**, and support decision-making processes and information sharing with Member States and various EU stakeholders.

It also continued to ensure the **EU’s duty-of-care for its staff across 145 Delegations** around the world, providing a safe and secure environment for staff to conduct their work. In cooperation with Member States, the EEAS CRC ensured and revised a number of preparedness and response plans to consular crises affecting EU citizens abroad, through an increased number of exercises and contingency plans—over 55 consular crisis preparedness exercises were conducted and 116 Joint frameworks were adopted over the reporting period.

Following up on the updated EU exercise requirements outlined in the Strategic Compass, the CRC played a leading role in the revision of the EU Exercise Policy under CFSP that was approved by the Council in 2024 and encompasses the EU Integrated Resolve and Military Exercises, among others.

Looking ahead, the CRC will continue to work towards enhancing its ability to anticipate and prepare for crises by integrating new tools and technologies, and leveraging its relations with partners’ crisis centres. Nonetheless, it will continue to support the network of EU Delegations by strengthening their preparedness for complex crises.

(3) COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Two years after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the EU and Member States continue to provide substantial support to Ukraine to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to strengthen the EU's security and defence agenda.

Faced with the return of high-intensity warfare in Europe, the EU intensified efforts to enhance its defence readiness throughout 2024 and 2025. The **Joint White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030**, presented on 19 March 2025 by the Commission and the High Representative outlined actions to increase EU support to Ukraine, rapidly procure and develop critical defence capabilities and support the European defence industry through aggregated demand and increased collaborative procurement. The implementation of the White Paper will be supported by the **ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030**, providing additional financial levers to Member States to drive an investment surge in defence capabilities. The proposed SAFE regulation aims to mobilise EUR 150 billion from the capital markets, and the coordinated use of the National Escape Clause (NEC) under the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) can provide Member States with up to 1.5% of GDP additional fiscal space.

The **Preparedness Union Strategy**, presented on 26 March 2025 by the Commission and the High Representative, aims to make the EU and Member States more resilient and better prepared to anticipate and manage a broad range of risks and threats to our security.

The EU and Member States continued to make progress in the implementation of the **Strategic Compass**, adopted by EU Member States in March 2022 across its four pillars: Act, Secure, Invest, and Partner. The High Representative presented the third annual progress report of the Strategic Compass in 2024 and 2025. In the Council Conclusions on Security and Defence of 27 May 2024, Member States acknowledged the concrete advancements and urged for a full and swift implementation of all commitments.

Progress was made on the operationalisation of the EU **Rapid Deployment Capacity** (EU RDC), with full readiness announced by the High Representative on 20 May 2025. Key steps included two additional EU live military exercises, held in November-December 2024 and in April 2025, as well as strengthening of the staffing, infrastructure and communication and information systems **of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability**. The Member States agreed on the scope and definition of common costs for military missions and operations, exercises and EU RDC in November 2024. The Council adopted conclusions on the Strategic Review of the **Permanent Structured Cooperation** (PESCO) in November 2024, paving the way for the amendment of the PESCO legal framework by the end of 2025.

The EEAS, the Commission services and the EDA worked with Member States on implementing the commitments of the second **Military Mobility** Pledge of 2024 to enable rapid and seamless movement of military assets and personnel, within and beyond the EU. This includes prioritising investments in transport infrastructure benefitting military movements, accelerating cross-border movement permissions and enhancing EU-NATO cooperation. The revised Military Requirements adopted by the Council in March 2025, included four new EU military mobility corridors, helping to guide future infrastructure investments.

The implementation of the political commitments and actionable deliverables within the new **Civilian CSDP Compact** of May 2023 advanced. A structured Civilian Capability Development Process (CCDP) has been set up to provide a clear overview of available capabilities as well as existing shortfalls, to better support civilian CSDP missions. The Second Annual Conference on Civilian Capabilities took place on 10 April 2025 and discussed the Civilian Capabilities Assessment Report—the first structured baseline of civilian CSDP capabilities to guide national and EU-level capability development to better prepare civilian missions for future challenges.

In line with the 2023 Civilian CSDP Compact commitments, the first impact evaluation was launched in EULEX KOSOVO in 2025 by a team of evaluation experts seconded from the Member States, to ensure the independent evaluation of the impact of civilian CSDP missions.

In February 2025, the High Representative and the Commission presented the first Progress Report on the Implementation of the EU Joint Communication 'A New Outlook on the Climate and Security Nexus'. A **Climate and Security Trend Analysis**, commissioned by the EU, was also published, which identifies critical pathways through which climate change exacerbates security risks.

With regard to **countering terrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE)**, the EU continued to reinforce its role as a norm-setter, promoting a rights-based and whole-of-society approach to Counterterrorism (CT)-P/CVE within multilateral structures, in particular within the UN, the **Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)** that it co-chaired, and engaging also within the Global Coalition Against Da'esh. In September, the EU launched the GCTF “Brussels Memorandum of Good Practices for Oversight and Accountability Mechanisms in Counterterrorism”, setting out practices to improve the roles, responsibilities and effectiveness of such mechanisms, in line with international human rights law and international humanitarian law obligations.

In the field of **space security and defence**, the 2023 EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence continued to be implemented. This included the release of the second yearly classified space threat landscape report by the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) in January 2025. Partnering for responsible behaviours in outer space remained a key priority, with several bilateral engagements on space security taking place, including with the Republic of Korea, India and Japan respectively in March, April and May 2025. In November 2024, the **EU Satellite Centre (SatCen)** held its 150th landmark Board meeting.

Over the past months, there was an intensification of Russia’s hybrid activities—from cyber-attacks and information manipulation and interference campaigns to cases of arson, sabotage, including of critical infrastructure as well as instrumentalisation of migration and other disruptive activities. The EU has continued to make use of its Hybrid Toolbox to enhance collective situational awareness around hybrid threats and develop a coordinated response to Russia’s malicious activities. To support its partners facing similar threats, the EU has also deployed for the first time its **Hybrid Rapid Response Teams** to address specific immediate needs and enhance Moldova’s preparedness and resilience against hybrid threats.

The implementation of the 2020 Joint **Cybersecurity Strategy** continued with promoting the rules-based order in cyberspace as well as strengthening and using capacities to prevent, deter and respond

to cyber-attacks. The EU has further supported the proposal of a UN Cyber Programme of Action (PoA) to be established by 2026. The EU continues to actively engage in multilateral, regional, bilateral and multi-stakeholder settings, including by organising trainings and workshops, to promote a global, open, stable and secure cyberspace and support third countries. Cyber dialogues with the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Japan, India and Korea were also organised, while cyber issues were included on the agenda of regular security and defence consultations with other partners. In cooperation with the European Commission, the EEAS has worked to further develop cyber capacity-building projects to enhance global cyber resilience, tackling cybercrime and allow to meaningfully engage in multilateral and regional negotiations on cyber. To raise awareness and promote accountability in cyberspace, the EEAS continued to develop and make use of its EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox, notably through the use of the cyber sanctions framework, joint statements, as well as an increased cooperation with like-minded partners. Over the reporting period, nine additional individuals were added on the EU sanctions list for malicious cyber activities against EU Member States and Ukraine.

The **global disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control** architecture continued to be under strain, as a consequence of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, China's increased assertiveness and the Middle East crisis. EU efforts throughout the year focused on upholding, supporting and further advancing the relevant multilateral framework and institutions, with a coordinated approach with partners. This included strong EU positioning at the fourth Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the second Preparatory Committee to the 11th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the 79th UN General Assembly, and the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

The EU conducted more than **20 thematic as well as security and defence dialogues** with bilateral and international partners. Furthermore, after signing its first tailored Security and Defence Partnerships with Moldova, Norway, Japan, South Korea, Albania, and North Macedonia, the EU has launched negotiations with Canada.

The strategic **partnership with NATO was strengthened**, as illustrated by the close coordination on the support to Ukraine, a high-level and senior officials meetings, regular cross-briefings, and the launch of four new Structured Dialogues on emerging and disruptive technologies, climate and defence, cyber and defence industry.

The implementation of the **EU-UN Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management** progressed and the EEAS successfully conducted the **EU-UN Strategic Dialogue on conflict prevention and mediation**, with a focus, among others, on the support to national prevention strategies and knowledge exchanges on integrating climate and environmental aspects in peace mediation and dialogue.

The EU also reinforced its cooperation with the **African Union** in promoting peace and security across the African continent, as well as the **Economic Community of West African States** (ECOWAS), the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** (ASEAN), the **Gulf Cooperation Council** (GCC, with the two editions of EU-GCC Regional Security Dialogue since 2024) or the **Organisation**

for **Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**. The **EEAS supported peace processes in more than 25 conflicts around the world** and further supported peacebuilding by organising the first annual “Brussels Peace Week” draw and the 5th **EU community of Practice on Peace Mediation**, for over 600 peacebuilders.

The **EU Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Due Diligence Policy on Security Sector Support to third parties** was endorsed at ministerial level, providing an overarching risk management framework, with core principles and concrete actions to manage potential human rights and IHL-related risks. Alongside the European Commission, the EEAS conducted a comprehensive review of the EU Security Sector Reform support (as per the Framework⁵). The EEAS also advanced work on the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, including preparatory work for EU endorsement of an UN common pledge to support women mediators.

Despite the complicated and unstable geo-political context, EU CSDP Missions and Operations have continued to adapt to the evolving challenges and delivered more security for the benefit of EU citizens and our partners.

Three years after its creation, **the European Peace Facility** has made a concrete impact by increasing EU partners’ capabilities to prevent and respond to conflicts and crises, increase their resilience and contribute to better protecting their population from security threats. The EPF has continued to deliver on its global scope, and Assistance Measures with 28 partners in the Eastern Neighbourhood, Western Balkans, Southern Neighbourhood and Africa have been adopted. In addition, the EPF continued to finance the common costs of EPF Military Missions and Operations, thereby contributing to the effectiveness of the EU’s military CSDP.

The High Representative has proposed a **new ammunition initiative in 2025**, with the objective of providing Ukraine with 2 million rounds of large-calibre artillery ammunition by the end of this year.

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016JC0031>.

(4) PRIORITIES FOR 2025

Europe

On the **Arctic**, the expectation is for continued posturing in global security rivalry to spill over to key locations. The vulnerabilities from climate change will likely cause major damage and open up easier access to Arctic resources. The EU will continue implementing the objectives of the EU Arctic Policy with a view to reinforcing cohesion and collaboration with relevant Arctic states and observers and like-minded partners. Work is ongoing on strengthening our cooperation with the non-EU Western Europe partners; it is essential to further our values-based geopolitical engagement, including in the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and cooperation on security and defence.

To further the regional focus, making progress on the **Western Balkans'** EU membership perspective will remain part of the shared priorities looking forward, encouraging partners to deliver on the implementation of EU-related commitments; encouraging continued full alignment with CFSP, including on positions and restrictive measures related to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, advancing the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, including by implementing the Agreement on the Path to Normalization between Kosovo and Serbia and all past Dialogue agreements. The EU continues to explore opportunities to further cooperation in security and defence through the EPF at both the bilateral and the regional level in the Western Balkans. The EU stands ready to further develop tailored security and defence dialogue and cooperation with Western Balkan partners, based on mutually beneficial interest, including by launching bilateral security and defence dialogues.

In 2025, EU-**Türkiye** relations will be shaped by continuous efforts to advance the bilateral agenda along the approach defined by last year's EUCO conclusions, while also engaging with Türkiye on key foreign policy issues, especially in the neighbourhood but also beyond. Türkiye's role in the Black Sea, Syria, Central Asia, Africa - as well as its potential contribution to strengthening of European security, also on the context of its role as NATO Ally, present opportunities for stronger engagement while also keeping in mind that efforts will have to be continued to bridge the differences and address existing challenges in EU Türkiye relations.

Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asia

The EU will continue to provide unwavering support to **Ukraine**, including efforts towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. Continuing and increasing military support to Ukraine will remain a key priority, to strengthen the capabilities of the Ukrainian armed forces. With EU accession as the ultimate EU security commitment, and building on existing support, the EU will continue strengthening Ukraine in the context of peace talks and to deter acts of aggression in the future. The EU will continue to provide Ukraine with regular and predictable financial support and increase outreach to global partners to broaden the international support for Ukraine.

More generally, the EEAS will also continue promoting resilience, stability and the rule of law in the **Eastern neighbourhood region** by keeping it high on the agenda, with future engagement guided by the EU's enlargement efforts, **Eastern Partnership**, **Black Sea Strategy** and connectivity agenda. Further emphasis on support to civil society and independent media is needed, also in view of space

left by cuts in US assistance. The June 2024 European Council Conclusions invited the Commission and the High Representative to develop a new “strategic approach to the Black Sea.” Developed in collaboration with the EEAS, the Joint Communication on the Black Sea was adopted on 28 May 2025. The EU will continue strengthening the Solidarity Lanes both in preparation for increased bilateral trade along the accession path and as a back-up, given persistent threats from Russia. Despite the suspension of Russia and Belarus from all regional activities, the EEAS will continue working in these formats to promote sustainable development, people-to-people cooperation and to address environmental and energy security aspects.

The **EU enlargement process** has gained new historic momentum with the decision to open negotiations with **Ukraine and Moldova** and to grant candidate status to **Georgia**. Together with the European Commission, the EEAS will continue supporting Ukraine and Moldova, and Georgia should the country revert to the EU path, in this merit-based process while monitoring the implementation of necessary reforms by the three countries.

The EU should continue with its enhanced security and defence cooperation with **Moldova** in order to strengthen its resilience, i.a. through the support under the European Peace Facility and using the full potential of the recently signed Security and Defence Partnership. It should also continue supporting Moldova in pursuing the necessary reforms on its EU accession path.

The EU should continue urging **Georgia** to return to the EU path, implement democratic reforms and guarantee the full respect for fundamental rights. It should also continue its involvement in conflict resolution efforts, including through the work of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia and the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia.

The EU should continue supporting the normalisation process between **Armenia and Azerbaijan**, including with respect to the opening of borders and connectivity based on the principles of sovereignty and jurisdiction. In parallel, the EU should continue to engage with Azerbaijan on all areas of mutual interest, including energy and connectivity, while restoring its dialogue on human rights and the rule of law. The EU should continue deepening its relations with **Armenia** in all areas, including in the field of security and defence, in order to support Armenia’s resilience. In this context, the EU should proceed with finalising and adopting the new EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda and continue its support to Armenia’s democratic reforms.

The EU should continue efforts to promote democracy, rule of law and human rights in **Belarus**, including through actions to promote accountability and support to relevant initiatives, including in multilateral fora. The dual-track approach should be maintained, according to which the EU will continue to put pressure on the regime, including through sanctions, and provide support to the Belarusian civil society and independent media. The ultimate goal of democratisation of Belarus, promotion of people-to-people contacts and strategic communications efforts will remain at the core of future EU actions towards the Belarusian people.

Building on the political momentum created at the EU-Central Asia Summit in April 2025, the EU should continue to strengthen its ties with **Central Asia**, especially in the identified key areas of cooperation, e.g. connectivity, transport and supply chains diversification (notably through the development of the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor), critical raw materials, security, as well as

climate and green transition. These efforts are to be supported by the work of the newly-appointed EU Special Representative for Central Asia.

Africa

The EU will strengthen and deepen **EU-Africa relations**, in a Team Europe approach, with a focus on continued implementation of the commitments of the 6th AU-EU Summit and through deepening AU-EU engagement on multilateralism. Marking the 25th anniversary since the first EU-Africa Summit in 2000 in Cairo, 2025 is an opportunity to give new impetus to our mutual partnership in an increasingly challenging and contested geopolitical landscape. The 7th AU-EU Summit is due to be held in the second half of the year in Africa. Working as strategic partners, the EU and the AU can pursue shared interests and provide mutual support: The Conference of Parties 30 in Belem (Brazil), the AU's membership of the G20 as well as the continuation of the Trilateral AU-UN-EU cooperation should reinforce dialogue and promote common solutions proposals at the multilateral level. The EU will continue supporting the AU in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. At continental level, the implementation of the Samoa Agreement is another priority.

Looking ahead, the EU work on the renewed approach on the Sahel as well as continue to engage on Sudan, the Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes, benefitting from the work of the EU Special Representatives in these regions. The EU will further enhance its engagement through its CSDP missions and operations as well as through additional EPF assistance measures.

Asia-Pacific

Looking ahead in the **Indo-Pacific Region**, the High Representative will attend the ASEAN Regional Forum and related meetings in Kuala Lumpur in July, and the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Council intend to participate in an EU-ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur in October. The EU will also advance its enhanced engagement with **Indonesia, Vietnam**, and the **Philippines**, with a view to taking relations to a higher level.

The EU will continue to engage constructively with **China**, focusing on outcome and results, on the basis of the EU's interests and defending the EU's principles and values. This will be pursued through continued consolidation of EU unity and by continuing to address risks linked to unbalanced trade and economic relations. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine will remain at the core of exchanges with China.

The EU seeks to hold bilateral Summits with **Japan** and the **Republic of Korea** in 2025, and seeks to continue to cooperate closely on current geopolitical and economic challenges—bilaterally and multilaterally in the UN and G7/G20. The EU will continue the implementation of the Security and Defence Partnerships established with both countries, respectively.

The EU will continue to develop the new strategic agenda with **India**, including through further high-level engagement and a Joint Communication.

The EU will support the reform process before and after parliamentary elections in **Bangladesh**.

The EU will continue to deepen its solid partnerships with **Australia and New Zealand** as two of the most like-minded partners in safeguarding security in the Indo-Pacific and the rules-based international multilateral system. Strengthening cooperation on security and defence matters will also be considered.

The EU will further intensify its partnership with the **Pacific Island Countries**, taking full advantage of the Pacific Protocol of the Samoa Agreement. Since the beginning of the year a partnership dialogue has already been held at ministerial level with Solomon Islands (4 February), and further such dialogues are scheduled with other partners such as Papua New Guinea. A major EU-Pacific Business Forum is scheduled to take place in September in Fiji. Finally, as a strategic dialogue partner, the EU will participate again at political level at the Pacific Island Forum Leaders meeting in Honiara in September 2025.

Americas

In the Americas, the EU will keep working to reinforce our longstanding strategic partnerships with the US and Canada and find positive and pragmatic solutions to common challenges. An EU-US Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial meeting took place in Warsaw in June 2025.

The EU will continue strengthening its relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that has become even more important in the current geopolitical context. The main milestone will be the organisation of the **CELAC-EU Summit** in Colombia on 9-10 November, which will be preceded by a meeting of **Ministers of Foreign Affairs**.

Following the general elections of 2 June 2024 and the inauguration of the new President on 1 October 2024, the EU will continue engaging with **Mexico**, one of its two strategic partners in Latin America. The conclusion of the negotiations of the EU-Mexico Modernised Global Agreement paves the way for a Ministerial Meeting/Association Council. This could serve as preparation for a possible Mexico-EU Summit in Mexico, where the Modernise Global Agreement could be signed as a major breakthrough in 2025.

With regard to **Central America**, the EU will continue to engage with a view to upholding democracy, human rights and inclusive sustainable growth, including through relevant bilateral frameworks (such as its memoranda of understanding with several of the countries of the region) and Global Gateway Investment Agenda. Work is ongoing to prepare the first EU-Central America Association Council in 2025.

The holding of the long pending EU-Brazil Summit and the signature of the **EU-Mercosur Agreement** will be crucial. The provisional application of the **EU-Chile Advanced Framework Agreement**, the negotiation of a **Partnership Cooperation Agreement with Colombia** and the conclusion of agreements on police and judicial cooperation with several countries in the region are also important milestones for 2025.

Middle East and North Africa

The unstable situation in the Middle East is likely to keep the region at the top of the EU's foreign policy agenda in 2025, alongside Ukraine. The EU will seek to reinforce its role in helping to tackle the crisis, mobilising its full toolbox (political, humanitarian, cooperation, security and defence). It will set out its framework for action in the EU Pact for the Mediterranean. On the **Gulf**, the EU is in the implementation phase of its Strategy and needs to deliver on all the pillars of the Joint Communication. Negotiations are envisaged for bilateral **Strategic Partnership Agreements** with all Gulf partners to mirror current intense and multi-faceted cooperation. The rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape and volatile situation in the region will require a more strategic approach, as underlined in the Political Guidelines of President Von der Leyen for the new Commission. To this end, a 'Pact for the Mediterranean' is to be adopted in autumn 2025, which will set out the EU's future framework of action in the region.

Iran

The EU will continue to address all issues of concerns through its direct channels with Iran and remains ready to engage on issues of common interest. The EU will monitor Iran's foreign policy, including its unacceptable military support to Russia and in particular any new delivery of ballistic missiles. The EU will follow domestic developments and the human rights situation closely and actively support Member States' efforts to facilitate the release of arbitrarily detained EU citizens. The EU will continue working for a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. Progress on bilateral EU-Iran relation will hinge on progress in all areas of interest for the EU.

Common Security and Defence Policy

In order to enhance **defence readiness**, the EU needs to urgently reinforce its own defence capabilities while at the same time continuing to provide support to Ukraine. Therefore, the implementation of the White Paper on European Defence Readiness and the European Defence Industrial Strategy are a top priority in 2025. To strengthen the EDTIB, an agreement on the European Defence Industry Programme, the draft SAFE regulation and the proposal to activate the National Escape Clause as part of the Stability and Growth Pact should be reached as soon as possible.

The EU and its Member States will update the **PESCO** legal basis including the PESCO binding commitments in 2025. The High Representative and the Commission will adopt, by the end of 2025, a Joint Communication on Military Mobility, accompanied by legislative proposals to simplify and streamline the regulatory environment related to the swift and impeded movement of troops and materiel across the EU.

The EEAS will continue work in order to maintain the readiness of the EU **Rapid Deployment Capacity**, including by strengthening the Military Planning and Conduct Capability, conducting regular EU live military exercises, and further progressing on advance planning and force generation. The EU will continue implementing the **Civilian CSDP Compact**, working with Member States on commitments to increase the effectiveness of civilian missions and to develop the required capabilities at national and EU level. The EU will move forward with the **Preparedness Union**

Strategy's implementation, including by strengthening the EU Single Intelligence and Analysis Capacity and integrating preparedness into bilateral partnerships and our dialogue with NATO.

By the end of 2025, the High Representative will prepare a proposal to amend the Council Decision on the security of systems and services under the **Union Space Programme(s)** to adapt it to the new space threat landscape.

With the end of the UN negotiations on cyber within the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG), the EU will focus on the implementation of the UN Cyber Programme of Action. In parallel, the EU will continue to make use of the EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox to further prevent, deter and respond to cyber malicious activities against the EU, its Member States and partners.

The EU will continue to defend and, where possible, strengthen the multilateral framework for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, and work to protect, strengthen, implement, and universalise the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including the multilateral export control regimes. In order to ensure responsible military use of emerging technologies, respecting international law, the EU will continue to engage in negotiations at the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems with a view to move this process forward at the 2026 Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (the CCW). Likewise, the EU will continue to engage in international processes on the responsible military use of Artificial Intelligence. The EU will furthermore intensify its formal dialogues and consultations on non-proliferation and disarmament issues with like-minded partners and key actors and will continue to promote cross-cutting priorities, such as supporting and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women across the whole realm of non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as the participation of the youth.

Global

The EEAS will enhance its role in shaping and implementing the **EU's economic security** framework, deploy autonomous instruments, and develop trade and investment partnerships with third countries. Strengthening resource diplomacy, particularly through mutually beneficial critical raw materials partnerships and in line with the Preparedness Union Strategy, will enhance the strategic autonomy and shared resilience of the EU and its partners. These efforts will align with opportunities under the **Global Gateway Investment Package**.

The EU will continue supporting the South African **G20** Presidency in 2025, its priorities, and those of the African continent. The EU will promote reforms of the international financial system, multilateral trade rules, and development banks, while focusing on Global South priorities.

The EU will further engage in global **health** partnerships and support the implementation of the Pandemic Agreement and the negotiations on the pandemic access and benefit-sharing annex. Immediate efforts will include preparations for the Gavi Global Summit: Health and Prosperity through Immunisation, co-hosted by the EU on 25 June 2025.

The EEAS will contribute to protecting the EU internal financial market and combating money laundering and terrorist financing, supporting the Commission's work on the external dimension of **AML/CFT** policy.

The EU will continue fostering mutually beneficial **outreach to and partnerships with third countries bringing different policies into one policy agenda**, development finance institutions, and the UN. Addressing **fragility** remains a critical challenge; the EEAS, with the Commission, will develop a joint approach. By summer 2025, the EEAS will complete the **Mid-Term Review for East and South Neighbourhood programming (2025 - 2027)** reinforcing EU cooperation frameworks. The EEAS will continue to analyse the **BRICS'** political dynamics, evolution and initiatives.

A Joint Communication from the High Representative and the Commission **on EU Digital Diplomacy** was adopted on 5 June 2025, potentially to be followed by a discussion in the Foreign Affairs Council. This initiative will further integrate digital diplomacy into the CFSP, enhancing the EU's strategic presence and resilience in the digital domain and respond to the global challenges and competition between powers.

The EEAS will continue to promote unified action against the triple planetary crises and support sustainable green transition. The EEAS will support an ambitious outcome of the COP 30 on climate change, the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) and the third UN Ocean conference. The EEAS will continue work on implementing the climate/environment-security nexus, including a focus on water, the strengthening of the EU's energy security, and the external dimension of the EU Green Deal. To address the geopolitical consequences of conflict—particularly Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine—the EEAS will continue to facilitate coordination among Ukraine's G7+ energy donors. In line with the REPower EU Roadmap, it will also support efforts to phase out Russian energy imports and reduce revenue to the Russian war economy by curtailing shadow fleet operations and through outreach to reliable alternative energy suppliers.

On the preparation and negotiations of the next Multiannual Financial Framework, the EEAS will continue to work with the Commission to align geopolitical objectives, in particular on human rights, democracy and universal values, in support of the EU's global role and objectives.

The second edition of the **Global Gateway** Forum will be held on 9-10 October 2025 in Brussels. Building on the success of the 2023 inaugural forum, this edition will focus on advancing global connectivity amid geopolitical and geo-economic disruptions. Global Gateway projects will continue contributing to global health improvement, the green transition, to prosperity, employment, health, and education. They will also help reduce migration pressures, promote gender equality, and support stabilisation in fragile contexts.

Under the external dimension of the **Pact on Migration and Asylum**, the EEAS will help formulate, operationalise, and develop actions and funding in identified priority countries, complementing reforms to the EU's internal asylum and migration system under the Pact. The EEAS will continue to counter the instrumentalisation of migration through diplomatic engagement with selected third countries. The EEAS will remain engaged in established intercontinental migration dialogues, including the Rabat Process, the Khartoum Process, and the Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue.

Values and Multilateral Relations

In a changing environment and against the backdrop of deepening polarisation and funding constraints, the EU will continue to act as a **predictable, reliable and credible partner, upholding the UN Charter and the rules-based international order**. First, the EU will remain committed to the Pact for the Future and engage actively together with all stakeholders in its implementation. Second, the EU will support the UN Secretary-General's internal reform process (the UN80 initiative) to ensure that the United Nations remains effective, cost-efficient and responsive. Coordinated EU and Member State messaging will help shape reform proposals ahead of the 2026 budget cycle. Third, the EU will work towards an ambitious outcome of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) in Seville as an important step towards putting in place a renewed global financing framework for sustainable development. Fourth, the EU will more than ever continue to uphold the UN Charter and international law, whilst reinforcing partnerships and building new alliances to protect shared values and the integrity of the multilateral system.

In **advancing democracy**, the EU will continue to strengthen its engagement with all regions of the world, supporting efforts to build inclusive, transparent, and accountable institutions through a Team Europe approach. It will also keep on promoting credible, transparent and inclusive electoral processes through election observation and electoral assistance. The EU remains firmly committed to upholding democratic principles and values, and to supporting independent and pluralistic media, and civil society, with particular emphasis on the participation of women and youth.

Together with its partners, the EU is determined to protect the multilateral **human rights** system and uphold the central role of human rights and democracy in fostering peace, security and sustainable development. Reflecting a renewed sense of urgency, the extension of the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy until 2027 reconfirmed the EU's commitment to protecting and advancing human rights and democracy in its external relations, joining efforts with Member States, civil society, human rights defenders, democracy actors and international organisations.

Equality

The EEAS will proactively work for the equality of all human beings.

Given the recognised political importance of gender equality in CFSP, the EEAS will work to advance related commitments in multilateral and intergovernmental political fora. This includes the implementation of the principles and objectives of the EU Gender Action Plan III as well as the policy framework on Women, Peace and Security. The EEAS will do so through political and policy dialogue, by mainstreaming a gender equality perspective across all policies and actions, increasing targeted initiatives for gender equality, applying a gender marker to new financial commitments, and reinforcing internal procedures and institutional capacities.

As a key priority, the EEAS will also continue implementing the EEAS Agenda for Diversity and Inclusion (2023-2025) and its Action Plan as an important agenda to uphold equality, fundamental rights and the non-discrimination for all.

Strategic Communications

The EEAS will continue strengthening the resilience of CSDP missions and operations and update their response capacity to address the rapidly evolving FIMI threat. Additional steps are underway to reinforce and strengthen the Rapid Alert System to address the rapidly changing information environment. The EU's FIMI work will be further operationalised through the **European Democracy Shield**, which will reinforce the EU's ability to counter FIMI activities in the EU while also assist in reinforcing democratic resilience to FIMI among partners beyond its borders. Countering FIMI in EU candidate countries will remain a high priority, particularly in Ukraine and Moldova, while also reinforcing partnerships to counter such malign operations in Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. The EEAS will continue to build the capability of the EU's diplomatic presence to address FIMI, and reinforce cooperation with international partners and civil society to raise the costs for perpetrators.