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JOINT STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

**on the review of the implementation of the Joint Communication to the European
Parliament and the Council - Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support
security sector reform**

Navigating Complexity: The EU's Evolving Role in Supporting Security Sector Reform and Governance

Review of the implementation of the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform

Executive summary

The 2016 EU Strategic Framework marked a renewal of the EU's commitment to support security sector reform and governance (SSR/G) as interlinked processes underpinning sustainable peacebuilding, conflict prevention and rule of law. In addition, they provide the conditions conducive to socio-economic development and investment, and as such are a cornerstone of EU external action, beyond the limits of traditional security sector cooperation.

This document assesses the application and relevance of the Framework in a geopolitical and security context which has fundamentally transformed since 2016. It takes stock and draws out best practices, and outlines a number of challenges to effective EU support to the security sector. In a rapidly shifting geopolitical context support to accountable and effective security institutions is at the heart of the EU's external action priorities, and is inextricably linked to the Union's security.

The review concludes that the principles of the Framework remain valid as fundamental pre-requisites to effective EU security sector support. In contexts where the SSR Framework tools have been effectively used, they have provided a solid basis for a more strategic logic of engagement in support to the security sector. In several cases, these exercises had immediate positive effects on strategic reflection on SSR and on programmatic decisions among EU actors in the field and HQ and with partner countries.

However, the application of these principles must be re-thought for the EU 'offer' to remain credible, coherent and crucial, to contribute to long-term, sustainable impact. In particular, awareness and recognition of SSR/G as both a political and technical process should lead to enhanced internal resources and capacities. This would enable the EU to provide support grounded in continuous analysis and a thorough understanding of power dynamics and legitimacy structures, including the roles of traditional and informal actors, within the partner countries it engages with.

Effective intervention requires timely and integrated EU planning and a clear understanding of the roles and comparative advantages of each EU actor. Greater policy coherence can also strengthen leverage, create incentives and encourage progress on fundamental reforms, drawing valuable lessons from SSR/G experiences in Enlargement countries.

Support to large-scale SSR processes may not be the most viable approach for the EU where enabling political and security conditions are not in place. EU interventions intended to support

SSR processes in fragile or conflict affected settings in which democracy is challenged may risk only partial success or failure. Technical support of 'train and equip' should no longer be seen as an end in and of itself. Rather, coherent messaging and coordinated engagement by EU actors at political and strategic levels should be supported by programmatic interventions for better leadership, management (including financial management) and accountability with the aim of professionalizing the security sector and its actors. The EU could benefit from a focus on specific priorities and common interests with the partner countries, which may contribute to broader institutional reform at a later stage.

In the same vein, close coordination with EU Member States, UN actors and other international partners is essential for effective action, particularly in a context of shrinking resources. Trust must be reinforced between like-minded security partners to ensure fluid communication and substantive coordination.

Progress on cross-cutting issues such as gender and diversity should be grounded in consultations with national stakeholders to ensure a tailored approach and incremental gains rather than superficial improvements. With regard to human rights, greater monitoring, risk assessment and mitigation is essential when supporting the security sector, also to ensure EU obligations are met. This is also linked to the importance of oversight by civil society and informal/traditional actors and confidence-building between communities and security actors.

1. Introduction

Security Sector Reform (SSR) is a fundamental element of conflict prevention, peace building, democratisation, and sustainable development. It is an internationally recognised concept employed by, *inter alia*, the UN, AU, OECD, and OSCE. SSR is understood by the EU to be *‘the process of transforming a country’s security system so that it gradually provides individuals and the state with more effective and accountable security in a manner consistent with respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the principles of good governance’*.¹ A reformed and effective security sector² can help maintain stability, prevent the resurgence of conflict, and create a secure environment conducive to development. It can effectively support the fight against transnational organised crime, radicalisation and terrorism, money laundering and illicit financial flows, strengthening resilience of the EU’s partner countries and ultimately the EU.

The **Strategic Compass for Security and Defence** states that the EU needs to better link military assistance broader sectoral engagement including with civilian capacity building, security sector governance and reform. The 2023 **civilian CSDP Compact** further underlines the importance of SSR linked to the Feira priorities of strengthening police, rule of law and civil administration in fragile and conflict settings.

SSR focuses on **enhancing human and state security** through political and technical efforts. It emphasises that security provision, management, and oversight can be more effective and accountable when they are guided by democratic control, the rule of law, and respect for human rights.³ This is closely related to security sector governance, ‘the process by which security institutions are subordinated to oversight mechanisms, in order to deliver transparent and accountable public services as a public good’.⁴ The concepts of security sector reform and governance are distinct but closely interlinked, with oversight and governance support critical to ensuring the impact and sustainability of reform processes.

A joint communication on **Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support Security Sector Reform** (the Framework) was endorsed by the Council in November 2016⁵. The

¹ Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform, (52016JC0031 - JOIN(2016) 31 final)

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

² The Framework refers to the definition of security sector provided by the OECD DAC handbook on security system reform: supporting security and justice (that actually refers to it as system and not sector): a national security sector is seen as including the law enforcement institutions (police, gendarmerie, customs, border guards, etc.), the criminal justice system (i.e. penal courts, prosecutor’s office, corrections), the armed forces, the intelligence services, the institutions that provide political, financial and judicial oversight (line ministries, parliamentary committees, court of auditors, the judiciary, etc.) and non-state security actors, including customary authorities, traditional courts, guerrillas and liberation armies, private military and security companies.

³ <https://www.dcaf.ch/about-ssgr>

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Council conclusions on EU-wide strategic framework to support Security Sector Reform (SSR), (13998/16) <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24227/ssr-st13998en16.pdf>.

Framework aimed both to consolidate previous EU policies from 2006 on, and to integrate new elements in line with international trends explicitly recognising strong links between security and development. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Goals (SDGs) notably includes Goal 16 on the Promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The overarching objective of the Framework is *‘to help to make states more stable and individuals more secure’*. It also aims *‘to enhance the EU’s effectiveness in promoting and supporting partner countries’ efforts to ensure security for individuals and the state, as well as the legitimacy, good governance, integrity and sustainability of the security sector of partner countries.’*

The Framework’s broad scope encompasses all EU actors and instruments, including political/diplomatic, external action instruments, crisis response and CSDP civilian and military actors, in line with the EU integrated approach. It applies in all contexts, beyond conflict or post-conflict situations and covers political dialogue, strategic policy engagement and programmatic support. EU Member States (MS) are also encouraged to apply the Framework when framing their bilateral SSR programmes, including through joint programming.⁶

Viewing the security sector as an interconnected system, the Framework underlines that **security sector reform and governance encompass the entire system of (civilian and military) actors**, requiring a whole-of-government approach, or ‘holistic reform’ to which international actors, such as the EU, may contribute with different tools. It likewise recognises the **interdependence of security and justice components of the sector as a whole** and calls for its application to justice actors, in recognition of the fact that support to justice, security and legislative institutions must be strategic, adaptive and systematic.⁷ It further recognises the key role of informal and traditional security and justice systems in areas with limited presence of State institutions, in transitional contexts and fragile and conflict-affected settings.

The **EU SSR Framework requires that EU interventions be gender-sensitive**, i.e., underpinned by the understanding of the specific and differentiated security needs now in line with EU Action on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2027⁸. This is a key aspect of a people-centred approach to human security as a means towards a more effective, inclusive, and just security environment. Inclusive representation and participation in security forces brings a diversity of perspectives that can enhance decision-making processes.

⁶ In line with Council conclusions on Stepping up Joint Programming (8831/16).

⁷ Bleiker, C. and Krupanski, M. “The Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform: Conceptualizing a Complex Relationship”, Ubiquity Press, p. 31.

⁸ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/Action-Plan-EN_2020-2027.pdf

The EU has been at the forefront of SSR policy development and cooperation since 2005. Today, it is one of the major actors supporting SSR processes in partner countries undergoing transitions towards more stability, security, and peace. From 2016 to 2024, **EU direct support to peace and security amounted to €11.7bn**⁹. It covers a broad range of short- to long-term actions at national level across the world, in countries such as Chad, Chile, DRC, Gambia, Georgia, Guinea, Iraq, Lebanon, Somalia, Senegal, Mauritania, and Ukraine. Regional security dynamics are also addressed through support such as that to Benin, Togo, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire to mitigate the spill over effects of the crisis in the Sahel in the Gulf of Guinea. EU support also engages with partner countries across the globe from Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) to Central and South-East Asia to **counter trans-regional threats affecting the security environment such as terrorism and transnational organised crime**, and to support **integrated border management**. Growing challenges in the **domain of maritime security** mean that EU support is key in the Gulf of Guinea, the Indian Ocean, and across the Red, Black and Caribbean Seas. The EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) calls for EU action to enhance maritime security particularly in the sea basins around the EU and the EUMSS action plan comprises specific maritime security actions to be implemented in the Mediterranean, Baltic, Black and North Seas, as well as in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans.

This support goes hand in hand with broader governance initiatives in other sectors, be it the management of public finance or judicial sector reform as the EU works to **align institutional reform processes with tangible assistance measures**. It supports regional bodies' work towards a more coherent peace and security architecture to address gaps in institutional capacity, as well as in intra- and inter-institutional coordination, strategic planning and sequencing, and supports training and deployment of security forces in regional peace keeping missions.

Many EU actions are not labeled as SSR support although they directly contribute to improving human security. This is particularly important for countries with an **EU membership perspective, for which support to SSR is framed by the Enlargement Policy**. The latter is transformative by nature and provides a strong tool to promote democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights. In the EU's neighbourhood, assistance aims to increase transparency and accountability of state institutions as well as their effectiveness and capacity to identify and address security issues and threats.¹⁰

SSR remains one of the tasks explicitly referenced in the mandate of many CSDP missions and operations. Even when not explicitly referenced, the principles and approaches advocated by

⁹ Source: EC Dashboard extraction in November 2024, using the following OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Codes, 15130, 15210, 15220, 15230, 15240, 15250, 15261 used to monitor Official Development Assistance (ODA) It includes data from the EU Budget, EDF and EUTFs. This does not include support provided through off-budget instruments such as the European Peace Facility.

¹⁰ The relevant EU actors include EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies such as CEPOL, Europol, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA).

the Framework apply to the manner in which the missions and operations implement their mandates.¹¹

2. Assessment of the implementation of the EU SSR Framework

The Council Conclusions on the SSR Framework call for regular monitoring and evaluation of its implementation, while the Framework itself **provides for an evaluation of its overall performance** within five years of publication. In April 2023, the EU inter-service SSR Task Force (SSR TF) launched a **review of the EU SSR Framework** (policy review) in order to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the policy. This policy review draws upon the input received through a literature review of relevant EU and other documents, a series of workshops involving EU Member States, UN, civil society organisations, think tanks, independent experts and implementers of EU SSR programmes, a lessons identified assignment carried out by the EU SSG Facility, the country level SSR reviews from Niger (2020) and Georgia (2023), and brainstorming sessions with current and previous EU SSR Task Force members.¹²

2.1 Relevance of the EU SSR Framework

The geopolitical context in which the EU SSR Framework was defined has been fundamentally altered in recent years, with seismic shifts that have affected the prevailing system of global governance. These shifts have profoundly transformed the conditions for implementation of the Framework. A proliferation of conflicts – including in Libya, Syria and the Sahel, Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, and the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza – as well as an increased use of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), have reshaped the geopolitical context prompting the EU to adopt an approach based on ‘principled pragmatism’, to uphold a rules-based approach¹³.

These developments have led to a **growing challenge to SSR/G norms and principles, such as good governance, oversight and accountability**, as authoritarian regimes increasingly seek partnerships that ensure ‘regime security’, rather than ‘human security’. The trend has resulted in a steady **regression in civil and political rights**, further encouraging a separation of security and defence from justice provision and limiting democratic governance, human rights, gender equality and civilian oversight of the security sector.

¹¹ This is the case for the 22 ongoing CSDP missions and operations: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/missions-and-operations_en

¹² For the full list of activities that informed the policy review, please refer to Annex II.

¹³ This concept was emphasised in the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS), adopted in 2016.

The **emergence of new security domains** such as information warfare and cyber and hybrid threats, requires a further reflection on the definition of the security sector.¹⁴ Traditionally SSR has focused on institutional processes in police, border management, defence and justice sector, civilian oversight mechanisms, and accountability measures, but technological advancements are creating new areas, such as cyber and outer space, for which effective policy and effective governance are still nascent.

To add to the challenges, the effects of **climate change, environmental degradation and exploitation** have become increasingly visible since 2016, with impacts on human security and conflict situations, in particular where good governance, environmental legislation and law enforcement is weak or missing. Without increased awareness and security sector responses to these challenges, a sustainable development and the building of societal resilience to climate and environmental shocks will be increasingly difficult to achieve.

This review shows that **SSR/G support tends to be implemented in fragile and conflict-affected countries** because of the security challenges they face, rather than their potential for effective SSR/G interventions. Research suggests that large-scale reforms are unlikely to succeed during political crisis or conflicts, and in the immediate post-conflict period, regardless of how well they are designed or implemented. Additionally, donors tend to support large-scale SSR processes even in contexts where the absence of basic democratic principles, such as checks and balances, and the lack of respect for the rule of law and human rights undermine the possibility of a sustainable and inclusive process that benefits everyone.

SSR/G interventions intended to achieve sustainable reforms during armed conflicts and in non-democratic states, rather than simply lay the groundwork for a future opportunity for reforms, **are highly unlikely to succeed**. Even where non-democratic regimes appear willing to accept support for reform, they are far more likely to push for support to security force assistance such as train and equip initiatives, avoiding engagement in any meaningful reforms. Such support does not hinder a regime's use of security forces as a repressive tool, but also allows the fundamental and structural dynamics of the regime's security institutions to remain untouched.

Nevertheless, many studies highlight that SSR efforts in transition contexts, such as during democratisation processes or aimed at preventing conflicts or the extension of regional violence could achieve more effective results.¹⁵ **A holistic approach**, as underlined in the Framework, **remains fundamental** for addressing interrelated problems at different levels, and should be

¹⁴ The EU's definition of security sector is based on the one provided by the OECD-DAC Handbook on SSR. A national security sector compasses law enforcement institutions (police, gendarmerie, customs, border guards, etc.), the criminal justice system (i.e. penal courts, prosecutor's office, corrections), the armed forces, the intelligence services, the institutions that provide political, financial and judicial oversight (line ministries, parliamentary committees, court of auditors, the judiciary, etc.) and non-state security actors, including customary authorities, traditional courts, guerrillas and liberation armies, private military and security companies.

¹⁵ S. Detzner, Post Conflict Security Sector Reform, (USIP, 2022).

favoured instead of piecemeal, fragmented initiatives. Clear success stories to achieve sustainable improvements all feature the combination of mutually reinforcing efforts such as support to development of a comprehensive policy framework, improving laws and doctrines, force training, and reinforcing external accountability at both local and national levels. The case of the EU and other donors' SSR support to the Gambia since 2016 (following 22 years of dictatorship) can be seen as such a positive example. The rapid mobilisation of funding enabled the EU to play a leading role in dialogue during the transition period and to seize a window of opportunity to support the SSR process at political, strategic and operational level. The EU supported in parallel other transitional justice, constitutional and economic reforms through longer-term instruments, including budget support. Between 2017 and 2024 the EU effort has reached nearly €0,5 billion, the largest per capita in West Africa. This commitment was also motivated in part by the specific challenge posed to Europe by the irregular immigration flows originating/passing through The Gambia during the first half of the 2010s with a peak in 2016/17. After that period, according to Frontex data, the number of recorded Gambian migrants fell from 8,522 in 2017 to only 394 migrants in 2019 and 285 in 2020¹⁶.

EU support to Ukraine is also worth highlighting for its unique context of a country at war engaging at the same time in major SSR/G measures to enhance the leadership, management and accountability of the security and defence forces. Ukraine's candidate status also underlines the **distinctive nature of the EU's Enlargement Policy** and the importance of national ownership and political willingness to advance on fundamental reforms. As recalled in the 2024 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, *"The enlargement process is merit-based and depends on the individual objective progress made by each of the partners. This requires determination to implement irreversible reforms in all areas of EU law, with a special emphasis on the fundamentals of the enlargement process [...]. A credible and merit-based prospect of EU membership is the key driver of transformation"* increasing the EU's leverage to promote significant progress and deep institutional reform, including within the security sector.

It is important that the application of **the EU SSR Framework is incentivised by ensuring linkages with relevant EU policies, strategies, and instruments** such as the Strategic Compass, the Civilian CSDP Compact, the Global Gateway Strategy, the European Peace Facility (EPF) or the Security and Defence Dialogues and Partnerships. In this way, the EU can continue to affirm its commitment to exert global influence while also upholding the values-based approach emphasised by the EU SSR Framework.

¹⁶ Cf. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 10146 : <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099548008222219454/pdf/IDU044e4c11c01f53041f408aec06a6adb79c705.pdf>

2.2 Effectiveness of the EU SSR Framework

The EU-wide Strategic Framework to support SSR is based on **nine main principles**.¹⁷ During the policy review, the assessment of the effectiveness of the Framework has been based on the extent to which these principles have been implemented.

2.2.1 Understand the security sector in its wider context

The security sector must be assessed as part of the wider public sector to ensure a clear understanding of the interlinkages and dynamics between the security sector and other State and non-State actors. The EU SSR Framework underlines that understanding the *‘formal and informal rules that govern how security and justice actors operate’* is key to meaningful EU engagement and recommends carrying out a *‘structured context assessment (e.g. a political economy analysis) covering all stakeholders (e.g. security and justice actors, including expected sources of resistance, drivers for change and groups traditionally excluded from the security and justice institutions, such as women, young people and minorities)’*.

To support EU Delegations (EUDs) and CSDP missions in implementing this principle, in October 2020, the EU SSR Task Force developed a **Guidance for Security Sector Analysis**, to assess and report on the security sector by facilitating structured compilation of available information and the identification of relevant information deficits. The analyses conducted this far¹⁸ have allowed the respective EU actors to enhance their SSR/G support by improving their understanding of the broader context of the security sector and involving beneficiaries in the formulation of actions to foster inclusive national ownership. However, **this approach remains to be systematised**. In particular, the analyses have not always been shared with EU Institutions, Member States, implementing partners and EU JHA, nor integrated into broader EU political engagement and dialogue. Conducting a political economy analysis of security institutions, as provided by the Framework, has also proven to be a sensitive and complex task, which has ultimately hindered its implementation.

When it comes to advancing gender-sensitive SSR/G, there is a **growing need for contextual and stakeholder analysis to effectively integrate gender considerations, especially in highly volatile environments**, to understand differentiated security challenges. Gaining a more nuanced understanding of the cultural context and legitimacy structures, including traditional authorities and groups, is particularly useful in view of identifying solutions that work at community level and cater for their specific needs.

¹⁷ For the full list, please refer to Annex I

¹⁸ So far such analysis have been developed in Armenia, Burkina Faso, Chad, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mali, Niger and Ukraine, usually together with an SSR matrix (see 2.2.4).

2.2.2 Enable broad national ownership

The EU SSR Framework emphasises **national ownership as one of the most fundamental principles** for any sustainable intervention in the security sector. While external actors can provide advice and support, responsibility and ownership over reforms should rest in the hands of State security and justice institutions, underpinned by oversight mechanisms.

Application of this principle has often been limited to formal declarations or statements in the development of national security policies, rather than genuine mutual commitments. **Even when interventions are aligned with national policies and priorities, ownership may remain a challenge**, since policies may have been developed primarily to respond to donor priorities, and the responsibility for strengthening national ownership has *de facto* been left to the implementing partners. In Niger, for example, while national ownership was recognised as fundamental by all EU actors, the policy framework often took a backseat to internal political and security dynamics.

Understanding of the different political actors and interests relevant to SSR/G has been identified as crucial for ensuring national ownership, along with assessing the level of financial resources allocated to SSR/G and the management of public finances within the security sector. Corruption and exclusive governance are further indicators measuring national ownership and political will to undertake SSR/G. Another key aspect lies in the inclusivity of the programming design. While a programme may be based on the priorities of the partner country, inclusive programme design should engage with the partner government and other stakeholders in and beyond capitals and urban centres from the earliest possible stage.

Additionally, national buy-in is key for gender-sensitive SSR/G reform, especially in societies with strong traditional norms, as achieving meaningful progress requires long-term strategies developed in consultation with local stakeholders. SSR/G programming can **foresee capacity building on gender and governance**, and identify motivated change-makers within security sector structures to help drive nationally-led initiatives.

With regard to countries with an enlargement/accession perspective,¹⁹ ownership is a key element as States need to deliver on the reforms required by the alignment with the acquis. **Greater emphasis on fundamental reforms** was further reinforced in 2020 with the **revised methodology for accession negotiations**. The ‘fundamentals first approach’ underlines the need for progress under rule of law and fundamental rights, functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform. The negotiations pace is contingent upon candidate countries to delivering credibly on key reforms throughout the process, with the so-called fundamentals cluster opened first and closed last. In the absence of political will and credible reforms on the fundamentals, the

¹⁹ While the principles outlined in this Joint Communication also apply to enlargement countries, the accession process involves different measures and procedures to ensure that the countries meet the accession criteria.

overall process is stalled. Setting such a strong incentive strengthens national ownership of reform efforts by candidate countries that engage in SSR/G.

2.2.3 See the bigger picture

The security sector cannot be treated separately from wider good governance initiatives. The Framework highlights that the ‘*EU should encourage partner governments and civil society to embed security sector issues in nationwide multiannual development strategies (...) and governance efforts in other sectors*’. However, the policy review identifies that, often, **achieving systemic changes through SSR has not been a priority reflected in EU practices**, due to the difficulty of balancing this objective with shorter-term priorities and of using effective leverage with relevant national stakeholders.

Moreover, the connection between EU security sector support and SSR/G is not always perceived as clear. In fact, **EU support to strengthen capabilities of various security actors has not been sufficiently accompanied by initiatives on governance, democratic oversight and legal provisions to frame its security sector assistance**. In many cases, EU support has consisted of uncoordinated, small-scale programmes (siloed approach), reducing its effectiveness. This is because the interconnectedness of different thematic areas and sectors makes it difficult to achieve desired outcomes and sustainable results without a wider perspective and a broader security sector engagement strategy.

In the Sahel, a common perception among EU actors has been that EU instruments were designed to provide training, equipment and technical advice in a time of acute crisis, and not intended to support comprehensive and inclusive transformation. EU Sahel strategies were considered too vague to properly anchor assistance and programming decisions at country-level and to link security support with the regional stabilisation initiatives of the EU and its Member States. Given the lack of political capital invested in SSR/G, at field level, decisions were ‘supply-driven’ and lacked ambition to facilitate long-term sectoral transformation.

The case of Somalia demonstrates how difficult it is to engage national authorities on oversight issues when their identified needs strictly focus on short-term and operational support. Ukraine is a distinct case in which the EU support is anchored to both an operational and an institutional perspective, with strong buy-in of the national authorities.

2.2.4 Systematic political and policy dialogue

The EU SSR Framework calls for SSR-related interventions to be ‘*systematically accompanied by broad sectoral political and policy dialogue and supported by high-level political engagement*.’ **Systematic political and policy dialogue – ideally informed by technical expertise – increases**

the credibility and weight of the European position in exchanges with national counterparts. Systematic dialogue can also serve to promote and strengthen national ownership, and by doing so enhance the effectiveness of EU interventions.

As stated, the EU remains one of the most important financial supporters of SSR/G in the world, although the way it leverages the support provided into political influence is not always optimal. **The EU could utilise more efficiently its many structured political and policy dialogues to promote deeper discussions of security sector governance challenges.** However, greater attention is generally paid to issues such as capacity building and training and equipment. The ongoing reinforcement of EU engagement in the security and defence fields²⁰ further underlines the need to step up political and diplomatic influence to support substantive reform and governance.

Even in countries where there is a strong EU commitment to supporting reforms, engagement may lack incisiveness, for a number of reasons, including an incomplete understanding of power structures and patronage networks that may influence the security sector, the lack of expertise and human resources dedicated to SSR/G both in Headquarters and Delegations, the lack of mechanisms to inform political dialogue and limited coordination of political messages from the EU and its Member States (see 2.2.5). Furthermore, the absence of established strategic priorities for EU SSR/G support risks political dialogue remaining superficial and simply addressing more operational aspects.

2.2.5 Coordinate EU support

The EU SSR Framework envisages strong coordination and cooperation between EU actors and EU Member States to foster synergies and complementarities between instruments and missions. It calls for the use of an **integrated approach, where ‘all EU diplomatic, development and CSDP support action should be coherent, coordinated, complementary and properly sequenced.’** At country level, it is the responsibility of the EU Delegation to coordinate all these EU instruments.

The development of a ‘coordination matrix’ (also called SSR matrix), is suggested as a tool to map ongoing support to SSR/G under various instruments in a country and to identify *‘appropriate links and sequencing between political dialogue, cooperation activities/instruments and possible CSDP missions/operations’*. These **SSR matrices, conceived as living documents, can be useful tools to provide an overall EU logic of engagement or strategy for security sector engagement** in the countries addressed and increase the effectiveness of the EU’s support in line with the integrated approach. Between 2017 and 2018 matrixes were developed in Mali, Somalia, Georgia and Lebanon, chosen as first pilot country cases. Since then, analyses and matrices have also been conducted in Burkina Faso, DRC, Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Nigeria.

²⁰ Notably through the Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument-Global Europe (NDICI-GE) and the European Peace Facility, in line with the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence.

These documents were effectively used, for example in the Gambia, Georgia and DRC, to inform new programming of EU support to the security sector, to exchange information between the EU and Member States, and to reach a common and shared understanding of the state of play of the security sector. They provided a solid basis for a more strategic logic of engagement in support to the security sector. **In several cases, these exercises had immediate positive effects on strategic reflection on SSR/G and on programmatic decisions among EU actors in the field and HQ.**

However, staff rotation and loss of institutional memory, compounded by an overall lack of resources and expertise, often prevented the Delegations from regularly updating the logic of engagement, as foreseen by the SSR Framework. It is worth noting that the EU has at its disposal several analytical tools for which EUDs are at the forefront of implementation. In a context of limited resources, the plethora of tools and analysis required or recommended to be implemented by Delegations contributed to an **analysis fatigue and made it difficult to ensure the matrices became living documents.**

SSR/G remains a broad field covering numerous EU actions which are not necessarily linked to SSR/G in an explicit manner, due to limited awareness and understanding of the wider SSR/G perspective as well as some confusion regarding official SSR/G programming classification. In addition, as many CSDP-related activities are not explicitly understood as SSR/G, coordination between all the relevant EU actors might not be built into planning processes or implementation, nor considered critical to coherent and effective EU support.

Dialogue between different EU actors in the field is often strongly related to personal connections and takes place on an ad hoc basis. In many cases, the EU SSR Framework and the supportive tools provided are not widely known in EUDs and CSDP Missions. For example, although CSDP missions recognise the need for a holistic EU approach as a priority, they do not have systematic access to the security sector analysis and SSR matrixes developed. Apart from generic provisions in Council decisions, Mission Plans or Operational Plans (MPLANs or OPLANs), and programming documents, there is little formal guidance to guarantee that coordination is ensured on a systematic basis and in all theatres. **The operationalisation of an integrated approach needs to be further improved.**

Reaching a shared understanding and setting common goals among EU actors and Member States remains a major challenge. Often the matrices (and analyses) are not shared with Member States, implementing agencies or civil society organisations. This lack of communication makes it hard to **implement a real integrated and holistic approach.**

There is usually no common political and strategic approach between the EU and Member States but rather ad hoc coordination on concrete actions. Supporting the security sector becomes also difficult when the individual interests of Member States do not align. Apart from accession candidate countries, SSR/G is often simply not considered a domain of coordination, especially in the wider perspective that should encompass justice and human rights. Bilateral projects are

sometimes developed without prior consultation with the EU or other Member States, thus increasing the risk of duplicating or contradicting existing actions. Weak national capacity or willingness to facilitate effective coordination further exacerbates donor community fragmentation. On the more positive side, a high degree of coordination exists among Member States regarding NATO initiatives in certain countries. Also, where the EU Delegation has dedicated staff, it can effectively bring together EU actors, MS and like-minded partners to optimise resources and deconflict programming.

The Framework emphasises close field coordination with international partners, and commits the EU to promoting comprehensive international engagement around a single security sector support strategy. SSR is one of the priorities of the 2022-2024 UN-EU strategic partnership on peace operations and crisis management. The 2023 Civilian CSDP Compact foresees the enhancement of partnerships with international and regional organisations, in particular the UN.

In Central African Republic (CAR) in July 2017, the UN and the EU signed a ‘joint MINUSCA-EU Delegation/EUTM RCA support plan on SSR and the rule of law’, which outlined the common objectives, the tasks of each organisation and the collaboration mechanisms. However, starting in 2021, this document has no longer been implemented. In the Gambia, a joint ECOWAS-UN-EU SSR scoping mission took place in May 2017 and resulted in coordinated and complementary support actions both at diplomatic and operational level. To secure the maximum level of ownership, the EU and UN proposed relevant mechanisms for regular review of progress in security sector governance and effectiveness.

2.2.6 Be flexible and balance long-term systemic change and immediate security needs

The EU SSR Framework acknowledges that transforming any security sector involves a lengthy process, demanding long-term vision and engagement. This **requires that the EU strike a balance between addressing immediate security needs and pursuing long-term efforts**. Furthermore, effective SSR/G programmes must be flexible and should be monitored and evaluated to take stock of progress, manage risks, draw lessons, and regularly review and adjust activities.

The Integrated Approach to External Conflict and Crises²¹ emphasises the need to link short-term actions and longer-term development. In line with this approach, the EU has considerably enhanced its capacity to adapt its SSR/G support to changing circumstances, emerging needs, and priorities. For example, the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-GE) aims to clarify the articulation between geographic, thematic, and rapid response actions to increase coherence and geopolitical influence. In addition, the EU created the European Peace Facility, an off-budget instrument to support military actors in partner countries

²¹ Council Conclusions on the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises (5413/18) <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5413-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

in a flexible and swift manner. The Civilian CSDP Compact stipulated that civilian CSDP missions should follow a scalable and modular approach. This has already been translated into a targeted CSDP initiative in the Gulf of Guinea.

With NDICI-GE, the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework confirmed the **possibility of supporting military institutions**,²² and allowed for more flexibility to changes over the life-span of the programmes. Linkages between support and long-term reform were also strengthened in some cases: prior to the coups d'état in Mali and Niger, the EU had reached an agreement with the respective Ministries of Finance that disbursement of variable tranches of budget support would be conditional upon progress on SSR/G indicators. A programme supporting defence reforms was launched in the DRC under NDICI-GE, supported by an EPF train-and-equip assistance measure for DRC Armed Forces to be deployed in the East of the country.

Balancing long-term systemic change and immediate security needs has been tested in contexts where the security situation has rapidly deteriorated, requiring swift operational and emergency responses. For example in the Sahel, the proliferation of short-term actions distracted from an overall vision and failed to respond adequately to more structural needs. In contrast, a long-term perspective has remained evident in support to reform processes in countries with an enlargement perspective.

With regards to gender sensitivity, the EU should maintain a long-term strategic vision on SSR/G which can play a key role in supporting governance and gender-specific initiatives focused on women's empowerment and changing of attitudes and behaviours. Priorities and strategies in this regard should be developed in close consultation with national stakeholders, including women's organisations and relevant ministries. This being said, even when national plans, such as those to implement UNSCR 1325²³, exist, their application is often not systematic or effective, due to resistance to change and a lack of resources. In many contexts, national stakeholders are willing to discuss gender mainstreaming in SSR only in terms of technical infrastructure (i.e. women's facilities on military bases) or human resources management, but are more reluctant to address the transformative empowerment of women within SSR/G.

²²Already introduced in the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) by the addition of the Capacity Building in support of Development and Security for Development (CBDSD) modality <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0947>

Article 9 Capacity building of military actors in support of development and security for development

1. In order to contribute to sustainable development, which requires the achievement of stable, peaceful and inclusive societies, Union assistance under the Instrument may be used in the context of a wider security sector reform or to build the capacity of military actors in partner countries, under the exceptional circumstances set out in paragraph 3, to deliver development activities and security for development activities.

²³ Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. The EU aims to actively implement 1325 as part of its Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda.

2.2.7 Measure progress: monitor and evaluate

The EU SSR Framework stresses that **adequate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at programme level is critical** and requires sufficient human and financial resources. M&E frameworks are compulsory for any EU funding, with baselines and feasible time-bound targets defined from the outset with impact indicators to measure results.

Cooperation projects can also be subject to public mid-term or ex-post external evaluations. Commission sector indicator guidance on SSR – with an overarching results chain and a list of sector indicators at impact, outcome and output level – is used to inform programme logical frameworks and reported on for overall Commission reporting purposes. With regard to countries covered by the Enlargement policy, the Commission publishes its Enlargement Package annually, which provides a **detailed assessment of the state of play of progress on reforms in each current candidate and potential candidate country**. The package's country reports also provide recommendations and guidance on reform priorities on all aspects of the fundamentals as well as for each chapter of the acquis.

Impact evaluations of civilian CSDP missions, as systematic and objective assessments of ongoing or completed missions, has been instituted in the EEAS in 2024. Based on mission objectives as defined in the Operational Plan, impact evaluations are meant to inform mandate reviews and support decision-making by the EU Member States.

The policy review flags an **overall need to address the question of impact evaluation of broader EU SSR/G support to inform the different layers of EU security sector engagement**. The EEAS/Commission guidelines for M&E requested by the Framework have not yet been developed. While focusing on outcomes and impact would provide additional information on measurable progress, in practice, M&E instruments still largely focus on activities and quantitative outputs (e.g., number of police officers trained) rather than outcomes and impact (e.g. contribution to state and human security). No benchmark inventory or system has been put in place to measure the effectiveness and impact of the EU's overall engagement in the security sector since 2016. Consultations carried out for this review revealed that M&E remains primarily an administrative obligation, which is often considered burdensome by both the implementing partners and the EUDs, and to which sufficient resources have not been reserved. The last strategic level evaluation on SSR dates back to 2010²⁴ and the annual review of the EU's SSR engagement to assess how the EU SSR Framework has supported SSR-related activities has only been carried out in Niger (2020) and Georgia (2023).

²⁴ Thematic Evaluation of European Commission Support to Justice and Security System Reform (Ref. ADE: A378-02)

2.2.8 Manage risk

The Framework emphasises the **importance of integrating robust risk management practices into SSR processes** to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of reforms, enhancing accountability, and building resilient security institutions that contribute to peace, security and development.

Some of the identified **risks include insufficient national political commitment to change, negative unintended consequences, reputational risks and risks of non-intervention**. To manage such risks, the EU SSR Framework highlights the importance of applying the ‘do no harm’ principle. It also calls for the development of a **EEAS/Commission risk management methodology for EU support**, along with a human right due diligence policy (HRDDP) to ensure that EU security sector support is in compliance with the EU’s international human rights and humanitarian law obligations. The **EU HRDDP was issued in 2023** with scope of application limited to CFSP/CSDP instruments and implementation guidelines were developed in 2024. In addition, the Commission’s HRBA toolbox was complemented with specific guidelines when supporting the security sector. In view of these developments, it is essential that this is harmonised to the extent possible to ensure complementarity and a coherent approach to risk management across the EU.

The EU has several tools at its disposal to manage risk and mainstream the human-rights based approach, as well as the ‘do no harm’ principle, especially in vulnerable and fragile countries. In 2013, the EU created the inter-service Risk Management Framework (RMF) to assess and mitigate risks in the context of budget support provision. In 2020 it was expanded to include non-budget support countries and is used to also inform political and policy dialogue and the design of complementary support.

Ensuring mainstreaming of the ‘do no harm’ principle has been rooted into development cooperation through the application of several complementary approaches. NDICI-GE, for example, states that the Union should promote a conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive approach in all actions under the Instrument. Another important component of the ‘do no harm’ principle is ensuring that issues and risks around sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are considered and addressed. A human rights-based approach is also widely applied in the context of development cooperation, underpinned by the five key human rights principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, equality, empowerment, and legality.

With regards to fragile or conflict-affected countries, the NDICI-GE Regulation formalised the requirement to ensure conflict-sensitive programming and external action through conflict analyses. The resulting Conflict Analysis Screening (CAS) methodology is not specifically designed to inform SSR/G engagement, although some of its recommendations

sometimes target the security sector; its findings and recommendations should feed into programmes to avoid unintentionally exacerbating existing tensions or fuelling conflict drivers.²⁵

2.2.9 Make best use of EU SSR expertise

The EU SSR Framework states that *‘the EU should mobilise staff with the appropriate expertise and experience and with a strong understanding of technical and political issues relating to SSR. It must draw on the expertise of EU Member States and, in specific areas where they bring clear added values, relevant EU agencies [...]. In countries where the EU has a significant SSR commitment, it should be ensured that the EUD has appropriate security sector expertise.’*

At Headquarters, the adoption of the EU SSR Framework led to the establishment in December 2016 of the permanent informal inter-service task force on security sector reform (the Task Force). **The Task Force serves as a platform for information sharing and effectively contributes to the coherence and effectiveness of EU actions in support to the security sector of partner countries** by providing policy/methodological advice and operational support.

EU expertise has also been strengthened through the establishment of the EU Security Sector Governance Facility, a resource that provides external technical expertise to support the implementation of the EU SSR Framework and partner countries in enhancing the development and governance of their security sector and its effectiveness in providing human security. Since its launch in 2018, this innovative instrument has provided **support in over 30 countries** engaging on reform processes, thereby enhancing the EU’s role as a global security actor.

The EU has also made significant efforts to reinforce SSR expertise by arranging a wide offer of training courses through the European Security and Defence College (ESDC). Curricula on SSR have been adopted along with the development of training requirements analysis. Most of this training targets CSDP rather than Delegation staff. Specific training on SSR is not compulsory for EU staff involved in the implementation of SSR and rule of law actions.

SSR expert positions both in the Delegations and civilian and military missions remain limited to support the operationalisation of the Framework. Furthermore, many staff are working on a broad portfolio related to security, justice, governance, civil society and human rights. As a result, they may not be able or empowered to engage on the broader SSR framework. Instead, their tasks tend to be compartmentalised and focused on technical and operational aspects of individual programmes.

Expertise from Member States remains an essential resource as Delegations can, in some cases, benefit from the secondment of security or military attachés (e.g. EU Military Advisors).

²⁵ The Commission also published a specific guidance note on conflict sensitivity for SSR in April 2024.

However, an overall lack of expertise on security and defence matters in the Delegations has led to situation where security related positions, such as counter terrorism experts, are sometimes called upon to assist the implementation of SSR/G actions. This review emphasises that when specific expertise has been available, particularly through the deployment of military officers to support EU Delegations, the credibility of the EU has been significantly enhanced. Secondments from Member States to Delegations on SSR/G may also be a valuable way to reinforce the Team Europe approach.

The review has identified individual training initiatives as best practises to further enhance the EU expertise. For example, experienced members of EUCAP Sahel Niger delivered a series of tailored briefings to Mission and Delegation staff, designed to clarify SSR/G and explain how it is implemented in the field, to enhance the understanding of SSR/G and its connection to the different mandates. EUPOL COPPS provides periodic presentations to EU and MS diplomats to enhance a common understanding of SSR/G. These are good examples of sharing expertise among EU actors and could be systematised and replicated on other contexts.

3. Conclusion

The review highlights the importance of refining the EU's approach to ensure a more effective and sustainable implementation of the SSR principles. In particular, it is important that the EU strengthen its efforts to implement a more integrated and coordinated approach, all whilst recognising the inherently political nature of its support to the security sector of partner countries.

EU engagement with the security and defence sector of partner countries should aim at the professionalisation of these institutions to enhance human security, good governance (including sound financial management), rule of law and human rights. It should promote and be based on a strong national ownership, extending beyond state-centric approaches to involve civil society organisations (CSOs) as well as non-state justice and security providers.

Central to this is the need for a **more nuanced understanding of the SSR Framework as a useful tool** that assists EU actors in defining priorities, identifying shared interests, and clarifying their respective roles and interventions with the partner countries. It enables a holistic, yet flexible and adaptive approach, as well as improved sequencing of political dialogue, cooperation activities and instruments, and CFSP/CSDP actions.

To inform this approach **the analytical and coordination tools provided by the SSR Framework, the security sector analyses and SSR matrixes, are effective to develop an EU strategy** for its security sector engagement. In this way, the EU could have an overall understanding of the security and defence sector in countries where support is provided and enhance joint planning processes, informing the whole EU toolbox for security and defence.

Close involvement of EU Member States at both Headquarters and field levels is crucial to achieve strong results in a **Team Europe spirit**. At the Headquarters level, a network of MS security and defence experts, coordinated by the EU SSR Task Force, could be established to facilitate exchanges. In the field, it is important that the EU security sector analyses involve the MS with local presence. Sharing the developed analysis of the security sector and the SSR matrixes with those MS is necessary, to strengthen a joint vision, coherence and complementarity in the implementation of whole-of-EU's support.

Maintaining an appropriate level of EU technical and human capacities, at both HQ and Delegations, needs proper attention. Regular SSR/G training for relevant staff could be an option. EUDs need to be supported with justice, security and defence expertise, as well as with analytical capabilities when designing and implementing support to the security sector. The security and defence attachés in Delegations could be more closely engaged to inform the EU SSR Framework implementation and the definition of the strategies for the EU security sector engagement. The EU SSR Task Force could be used more effectively to support Delegations, in particular during the design and programming phase of EU security-related interventions.

Whereas several findings of this review need to be nuanced or do not apply directly to an enlargement context, the **enlargement methodology can offer inspirations to several shortcomings identified in other contexts**, particularly those related to a lack of political leverage, insufficient ownership, or the need for sustained monitoring.

A gender- and conflict sensitive perspective, grounded in consultations with national stakeholders, including both institutions and CSOs, is essential in shaping the EU's security sector engagement. Successful support depends on the EU's ability to monitor, assess risks, maintain effective oversight and take rapid mitigation measures when necessary. Risk management should be reinforced through rigorous implementation of human rights due diligence (HRDD) and human rights based approaches (HRBA).

Effective coordination with the UN and other regional and international organisations is vital for ensuring complementary engagement and mitigating the risks associated with shrinking resources. In complex situations, by recognising the EU's priorities and added value with targeted support, the EU can demonstrate a clear strategic vision and avoid spreading itself too thin.

It is important that the EU 'offer' in international security remain pertinent in a competitive global market, to allow the EU to improve its strategic position as a credible and reliable security partner. The narrative around the EU approach should demonstrate that it can respond efficiently to the new challenges faced by the security sector of partner countries but also highlight the new opportunities that the EU's approach and instruments can create. Whereas the word "Reform" might not be the right one to use when supporting the security sector of partner countries in all situations, the principles behind SSR/G as detailed in the Framework should remain at the centre of all EU security sector engagement.

The objective of the EU security sector engagement in a given context should be clear to everyone in the Delegations, CSDP missions, and in HQ so that efforts can be invested to engage at all levels rather than treat the issue solely as a technical one. Short of this, there is a risk of

increasing disconnect between a principled policy on paper, Commission resources and CSDP missions. If it is to be impactful, security sector engagement should in the future be understood as coherent with, and contributing to the key priorities as spelled out in the EU Global Gateway Strategy and the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence.

Annex I – Actions, tools and key principles of the SSR Framework

The EU SSR Framework lists:

17 actions and tools:

- Carry out security sector analyses.
- Assess political commitment, base the support on national policies and priorities, involve all stakeholders.
- Use non-binding instrument entailing political commitments to discuss and agree benchmarks, to review them regularly and to measure progress.
- Develop EU ‘coordination matrix’.
- Promote a comprehensive international engagement around a single security sector support strategy to be developed together with the partner country.
- Set incremental and achievable targets.
- Engage in short term activities, open doors for future cooperation and sustain political and policy dialogue.
- Adapt the EU support by using flexible rules and procedures.
- Plan CSDP missions for long-term involvement in the security sector and entail close cooperation with the EU Delegations.
- Prepare a joint monitoring and evaluation guidelines, including indicators for all external action instruments and missions.
- Prepare a risk management methodology.
- Develop a human rights due diligence policy.
- Establish a permanent informal inter-service SSR task force.
- Update the ESDC SSR Training curricula and cooperate with Commission training services.
- Include in the instructions to Heads of Delegation the task to ensure local coordination of all EU stakeholders.
- Include in the CSDP missions’ mandate the provision of technical advice to EU Delegations.
- Ensure that the Delegation has appropriate security sector expertise.

9 guiding principles:

- Understand the security sector in its wider context
- Enable broad national ownership
- See the bigger picture
- Systematic political and policy dialogue
- Coordinate EU support
- Be flexible and balance long-term systemic change and immediate security needs
- Measure progress: monitor and evaluate
- Manage risk
- Make best use of EU SSR expertise

Annex II - Data collection activities performed to inform the policy review

- *Literature and document reviews*
- *Lessons identified analysis and way forward regarding the role of the EU SSR strategic framework on the EU support to SSR/G – carried out by the SSG Facility*

The overall objective of the analysis was to provide a general assessment of the implementation of the SSR Framework and its principles and its overall impact with three specific objectives:

- 1) To provide the EU SSR Informal Task Force with an analytic review of the collective experience and perspective of EU actors in SSR/G;
- 2) To identify good practices and lessons that will feed a set of discussions moderated by the Facility to help EU stakeholders to better define the EU expectations on the overall implementation of SSR/G support;
- 3) To make recommendations in order to address these expectations and reap maximum benefits for partner countries from a EU approach inspired by these good practices and lessons identified in supporting the security sector of partner countries.

- *Workshop – 25 May 2023*

‘Strengthening EU support to security sector governance – reviewing the EU SSR framework to respond to challenges and new realities’

The workshop, organised under the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and with the support of the Folke Bernadotte Academy, involved Member States CivCom and PMG Delegates, with the aim to:

- Increase awareness among decision-makers on security sector reform with a focus on democratic governance of the security sector – a priority area of work for the civilian CSDP missions and of great relevance for military CSDP given the broad scope of SSR. The focus was understanding realities ‘on the ground’ in partner countries and the challenges faced by EU in supporting reform in security sector contexts.
- Discuss options to strengthen implementation of the EU SSR framework, in light of the policy review. The seminar connected to policy development in the Strategic Compass as well as in the new Civilian CSDP Compact.

- *Workshop – 14 June 2023*

‘The implementation of the EU-wide Strategic Framework to Support Security Sector Reform: Gathering Civil Society Perspectives’

The meeting, organised with the support of the European Peace Building Liaison Office (EPLO), brought together several civil society experts to exchange and gather civil society insights and recommendations for strengthening EU support to SSR for improved human security. The meeting was also the occasion for sharing civil society experts’ assessments of previous and ongoing EU support to SSR, with lessons identified and good practices on working with security and justice

actors, and for engaging and supporting civil society organisations (CSOs) as partners to the EU. Moreover, during the workshop practical recommendations were formulated on how to improve the effectiveness of EU support to SSR and to enhance the roles of CSOs and other civil society actors as partners to the EU.

- *Workshop – 28 June 2023*

‘The EU’s Approach to Security Sector Reform Amidst Shifting Geopolitics’

The purpose of the workshop, organised with the support of the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), was to reflect on the key consequences of the current geopolitical shift, the EU responses to it, and what this means for future EU support to SSR in partner countries. The meeting was attended and informed by the interventions of several international SSR practitioners and experts.

- *Workshop – 23 April 2024*

‘The implementation of the EU-wide Strategic Framework to Support Security Sector Reform: Gathering Implementing Agencies Perspectives’

The objective of the meeting was to exchange and gather implementing agencies insights and recommendations for strengthening the EU’s support to SSR for improved state and human security. The discussion focused on:

- the sharing of implementing agencies experts’ assessments of previous and ongoing EU support to SSR, with lessons identified and good practices on working with security, defense and justice actors in partner countries;
- the formulation of practical recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of EU support to SSR and to enhance the partnership both among the implementing agencies and the EU as well as with partner countries.

The meeting, organised with the support of Enabel - Belgian Development Agency, brought experts from implementing agencies having worked on EU-funded projects in support to the security sector of partner countries and officials from both the European Commission and the EEAS.

- *Workshop – 16 May 2024*

‘The role of CSDP missions and operations in the implementation of the EU-wide Strategic Framework to Support Security Sector Reform’

The workshop aimed to collect and analyse insights and recommendations on the implementation of the EU SSR Framework through CSDP missions and operations. Moreover, the meeting was an opportunity to identify lessons in relation to principles and tools provided by the policy and their relevance to CSDP missions and operations.

The discussion, that saw the participation of EU staff from both the HQ and CSDP missions and operations, focused on:

- Concrete inputs from field experiences on the relevance of SSR/G and added value of the EU support
- The assessment/analysis, design, planning and execution of SSR/G support through CSDP missions and operations
 - Assessment/analysis of the security sector
 - Integration of key principles as cross-cutting themes
 - Application of the ‘do no harm’ principle and other risk management approaches
 - Enhancing the national ownership
 - Use of EU and MS security sector governance expertise
- Share reflections and best practices on Integrated Approach in the field
 - Coordination mechanisms with the EU Delegation
 - Enhancement of the political dialogue with technical expertise from CSDP missions and operations
 - Synchronisation of interventions between CSDP and Commission’s projects
- *Workshop – 23 May 2024*

‘Joint EU-UN workshop: lessons identified throughout the delivery of security sector reform and governance support’

The workshop brought together members of the EU SSR Task Force and the UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force to discuss how to foster strategic alignment and strengthen cooperation between the UN and the EU in support of nationally owned security sector reform and governance.