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From: European External Action Service (EEAS)  
To: Political and Security Committee (PSC)  
European Union Military Committee (EUMC)

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Subject: Military Advice on the note “Security and Defence Partnerships - a tailored approach for the EU's closest bilateral partners”

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Delegations will find attached the Military Advice on the note “Security and Defence Partnerships - a tailored approach for the EU's closest bilateral partners”

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EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



**Working document of the European External Action Service  
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<b>From</b>	<b>European Union Military Committee</b>
<b>To</b>	<b>European Union Military Committee</b>
<b>Title / Subject</b>	<b>Military Advice on the note “Security and Defence Partnerships - a tailored approach for the EU's closest bilateral partners”</b>
<b>[Ref. prev. doc.]</b>	<b>EEAS (2023)1047 REV2</b>

Delegations will find attached the EEAS(2023)1047 REV3 - Military Advice on the EEAS Note “Security and Defence Partnerships - a tailored approach for the EU's closest bilateral partners”, as agreed by the EUMC under silence procedure on 5 October 2023.

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### **Military Advice on the note “Security and Defence Partnerships - a tailored approach for the EU's closest bilateral partners”**

#### **References:**

- A. Security and Defence Partnerships - a tailored approach for the EU's closest bilateral partners. (WK 7676/2023 INIT, dated 09 June 2023).
- B. A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence - For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security (ST 7371/2022, dated 21 March 2022).
- C. Enhanced modalities for participation of third States in CSDP Missions and Operations (ST 11944/2020, dated 15 October 2020).

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

1. On 06 July 2023, the PSC invited the EUMC to provide a Military Advice on the EEAS Note “Security and Defence Partnerships - a tailored approach for the EU's closest bilateral partners” (Ref. A).

#### **B. AIM**

2. The aim of this paper is to give a Military Advice on Ref. A.
3. The related recommendations will be focused on the potential military contributions to the EEAS Note.

#### **C. CONSIDERATIONS**

4. The EUMC welcomes the EEAS Note on “Security and Defence Partnerships - a tailored approach for the EU's closest bilateral partners”.
5. The EUMC considers relevant to acknowledge that the EU's peace, security and defence cooperation should be implemented within broad bilateral partnerships with

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closest bilateral partners (referred hereafter as “bilateral partners”)<sup>1</sup>, on the basis of shared values and interests. It notes that a tailored approach for the EU's bilateral partners, by establishing Security and Defence Partnerships, will contribute to strengthen the overall EU ability to act and take greater responsibility for EU security and defence.

6. The EUMC recalls that, in line with the Strategic Compass (Ref. B), the EU aims at bolstering tailored bilateral partnerships that are mutually beneficial, foster support universal values and serve EU interests, particularly when there is a shared commitment to an integrated approach to conflict and crises, capacity building and resilience.

### **A tailored approach for the EU bilateral partners**

7. The EUMC supports the importance to propose to some of its bilateral partners the possibility to establish a Security and Defence Partnership. The EUMC agrees that these partnerships should be tailor made, covering the full spectrum of the relationships in peace, security and defence. The development of such partnerships must be aligned in accordance with the existing security and defence arrangements modalities and procedures, rules and conditions for the participation of bilateral partners in CSDP, as per Ref. C, and their involvement in EU peace, security and defence initiatives.

### **Objectives and added-value**

8. The EUMC recognises the added-value to politically elevate the framework and the arrangements on peace, security and defence with bilateral partners. It is also the EUMC's view that this approach would contribute to boost the cooperation, improve consistency and coordination of the different cooperation strands. In this vein, it would be possible to deliver a strong political signal of higher reciprocal commitment, bringing greater visibility, consistency and predictability to EU's engagement with bilateral partners in peace, security and defence matters.

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<sup>1</sup>To be identified in line with the Strategic Compass and the developing criteria as per paragraph 12. This applies throughout the whole document also for selected and strategic partners.

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### Legal aspects and process

9. The EUMC acknowledges the relevance to set the tailored approach for the EU's bilateral partners, based on political commitments but not legally binding obligations, legally considered as Non-Binding Instruments (NBI).
10. The EUMC reiterates that the PSC will maintain the overall political control and strategic direction of these Defence and Security Partnerships.

### Scope and possible deliverables

11. The EUMC encourages further considerations on the possibility to engage international and regional organisations in tailored partnerships beyond the already existing strategic partnerships<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, the EUMC especially welcomes the deliverables listed in Ref. A., which can have a significant military contribution, as recommended below. The EUMC stands ready to provide its military advice, when required, regarding the identified deliverables.

### Criteria and initial list of partner countries

12. The EUMC considers useful the criteria listed to identify potential partners and stresses that the criteria for the identification and the selection of the partners countries with whom the EU could consider to conclude such Partnerships should be general, flexible and tailored to the interests and circumstances of each relationship, based on the EU's strategic geopolitical interests and principles, notably set out in the Strategic Compass (Ref. B)<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the EUMC remarks that a geographical balance is necessary in the choice of the partners, based on the guidance provided by the Strategic Compass in relation to regional and bilateral partners' priorities.

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<sup>2</sup>E.g. with UN, NATO and AU.

<sup>3</sup>Including, amongst others, following: -Respect of International law; -Respect of UN Charter, particularly the principles of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries; -Respect of good neighbourly relations.

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### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

13. Considering the potential military contributions on the possible actions, referred in the “Scope and possible deliverables” of the EEAS Note, the EUMC recommends to:

a. Establish tailored Security and Defense Partnerships covering possible areas with a potential military cooperation dimension, in areas listed in Ref. A;

b. Refer in such Security and Defence Partnerships to the existence of, or the joint commitment to explore potential legally-binding commitments, such as:

(1) Framework Participation Agreements;

(2) Security of Information Agreements; ,

(3) ad-hoc Participation Agreements;

(4) invitation, on exceptional base, of Third States in individual PESCO projects and Third-Parties in the European Defence Fund (EDF) in full respect of agreed procedures and conditions for Third party participation in respective defence initiatives.

c. Increase the network of Military Advisers, in particular in some specific EU Delegations, in countries where such a cooperation is of high interest, fostering closer cooperation with bilateral partners, with a view to fully exploiting all the possibilities of cooperation.

d. Explore the following elements to implement the Security and Defence Partnerships:

(1) hold (annually) military-to-military staff talks between the EUMS and the Ministry of Defense of bilateral partners;

(2) invite the CHODs of bilateral partners for a special meeting of the EUMC (e.g. annually or twice annually) with a view to exchanging information;

(3) invite the CEUMC and the CHODs of bilateral partners to conduct reciprocal visits.

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14. Additionally, the EUMC recommends to:

- a. Explore the establishment of Security and Defence Partnerships with bilateral partners, in line with the above referred considerations and within the bounds of the agreed priorities, policies and strategies in compliance with the Strategic Compass. Additionally, consider the possibility to establish bilateral partnerships with international and regional organisations beyond the already existing strategic partnerships;
- b. Take the necessary and concrete steps by the EU to become a more assertive and decisive security provider, through a strengthened tailored approach with the EU's bilateral partners;
- c. Continue implementing tailor made partnerships with the EU's bilateral partners, with the aim at delivering added-value for the EU's ability to act and take greater responsibility for EU security and defence. In this respect, the military can play an important role. Moreover, inform the EUMC and the PSC on a regular basis on the implementation of the Security and Defence Partnerships;
- d. Consider further developing tailored bilateral partnerships for peace, security and defence, focusing on mutually beneficial agendas, tailored to mutual needs and interests and building on the existing relationships with other bilateral partners, as referred in the Strategic Compass, in order to strengthen and synchronize the common actions to address shared threats and challenges;
- e. Verify that the implementation of the Security and Defence Partnerships is real beneficial, effective and serves the EU interests.

15. The PSC is invited to consider this Military Advice and to agree its recommendations.

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