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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Council Conclusions on the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence

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Delegations will find attached the Council Conclusions on the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence, as approved by the Council at its meeting held on 13 November 2023.

**Council Conclusions**  
**on the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING:

- 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<sup>1</sup>,
- Council conclusions of 23 May 2023 on the ‘Fair and sustainable use of space’<sup>2</sup>,
- Council conclusions of 10 June 2022 on an ‘EU approach to space traffic management’<sup>3</sup>,
- Council conclusions of 23 May 2022 on the development of the European Union’s cyber posture<sup>4</sup>,
- Council conclusions of 21 June 2022 on a Framework for a coordinated EU response to hybrid campaigns<sup>5</sup>
- Council conclusions of 11 November 2020 on orientations on the European contribution in establishing key principles for the global space economy<sup>6</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> 7371/22.

<sup>2</sup> 9675/23.

<sup>3</sup> 10071/22.

<sup>4</sup> 9364/22.

<sup>5</sup> 10016/22.

<sup>6</sup> 12851/20.

1. ACKNOWLEDGES that space technology, data and services have become indispensable for European societies and economies and in the daily lives of Europeans and that they are drivers of research, technological development and innovation, creating job opportunities and economic growth, increasing European competitiveness, supporting the green and digital transition, protecting and safeguarding the EU and its citizens, and enhancing EU resilience and security; thus REAFFIRMS the strategic nature of space and the necessity to address, as Europeans, current and upcoming challenges in this domain; STRESSES the EU's determination, as a global space power, to provide immediate and long-term responses to these challenges;

2. REAFFIRMS that space is a global commons, free for exploration and use by all states without any discrimination, on an equal basis and in accordance with international law; REITERATES that international law, in particular the United Nations Charter and international humanitarian law, is applicable to outer space; and RECALLS that the Outer Space Treaty, the other UN treaties on outer space, as applicable, and the guiding principles developed in the UN framework constitute the cornerstone of global governance in outer space and provide an essential framework for the peaceful exploration and use of outer space for the benefit of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development; thus STRESSES the importance of conducting space activities in accordance therewith; URGES the Commission to present the results of the analysis of the legal elements and implications of the declaration of acceptance by the EU of the rights and obligations under the relevant United Nations Treaties and Conventions on Outer Space, which is expected of all major space powers, and where appropriate, to prepare a proposal on this subject;

3. NOTES that outer space is an increasingly congested and contested domain and that the rules-based international order has been increasingly challenged in recent years; EMPHASISES that irresponsible and hostile behaviours in the space domain have intensified in recent years increasing the risk of spill over effects upon European citizens, organisations, industries, and businesses; REITERATES the negative impact of destructive direct-ascent ASAT (Anti-satellite) missile tests, both on the threat perception and on the generation of space debris, which can hinder the free access to space; RECALLS that the last Russian destructive anti-satellite missile test in November 2021, which generated a significant amount of space debris, and the cyber-attack against the space telecommunication infrastructure of ViaSat, which took place in February 2022 with the escalation of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, both had significant spillover effects, demonstrating that space security, space safety, and cyber are closely interconnected; UNDERSCORES that threats to space infrastructure, systems and services can be an integral part of hybrid strategies combining intimidation, destabilisation, and economic disruption, and can have unforeseeable consequences for a wide range of users; STRESSES that such behaviours impact the security and defence of the EU, its Member States, and citizens;

4. ACKNOWLEDGES that irresponsible and hostile behaviours in space, including attempts to interfere with, manipulate, disrupt, or destroy space infrastructure, systems and services, may hamper essential space services; STRESSES that this has the potential to undermine the safety and security of the EU, its Member States, and citizens, its economic security, and affect essential services, including services in support of democratic institutions and processes, as well as to put international security and stability at risk;
5. RECALLS that space is key for the EU's freedom of action and autonomous decision-making in security and defence; and REITERATES the importance of space as an operational domain for security and defence, along with land, sea, air, and cyber;
6. UNDERLINES the need to enhance the resilience of EU space assets and the ability to promptly detect and identify hostile and irresponsible behaviours, and to respond proportionately, effectively, and firmly, using all available EU tools, in coordination with the EU Member States, with respect to their national competences and in line with the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States;

7. RECOGNISES the importance of developing dual-use space systems and services to take into account security and defence users' needs from the outset as much as possible, while guaranteeing the necessary level of security and resilience and retaining the civil nature of the Union Space Programme; and REITERATES the relevance of downstream space solutions for security and defence and the need to support the user uptake; UNDERLINES that this would contribute to fostering innovation in the EU, strengthening the competitiveness of the space sector, and enhancing cooperation among Member States;
8. STRESSES that the release of public space security strategies, doctrines, and policies is a key transparency and confidence-building measure, as recognised by the United Nations, and that it contributes to clarifying intents and sets forth the readiness of the EU and its Member States to prevent and respond to threats;
9. In this context, WELCOMES the Joint Communication on an 'EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence'<sup>7</sup>; CONSIDERS that it lays the foundations needed to properly address the strategic nature of space; and STRESSES the need to ensure timely implementation of actions as agreed by the Member States in these Council conclusions;

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<sup>7</sup> 7315/23.

## **I. INCREASING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SPACE THREATS**

10. INVITES the High Representative to prepare, in coordination with the Member States and drawing on their expertise, a classified annual space threat landscape analysis focusing on actors threatening the EU in the space domain; INVITES the High Representative to share this analysis with the EU Member States as well as with relevant EU stakeholders on a need-to-know basis; ENCOURAGES the Commission, as well as with public and private space actors, to contribute to the understanding of space threats through the security monitoring of their Space Programmes; CALLS UPON the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) to factor in the annual space threat landscape analysis in the review of the EU threat analysis;
11. To this end, ENCOURAGES the strengthening of SIAC under the High Representative, along with the Member States' military and civilian intelligence services, with a view to increasing their strategic understanding of space threats and counterspace, by including them in the intelligence requirements; WELCOMES the contribution of EU Satellite Centre (EU SatCen) in support of SIAC as an EU instrumental autonomous capability providing geospatial intelligence;



**II. ENHANCING THE RESILIENCE AND PROTECTION OF SPACE SYSTEMS AND SERVICES IN THE EU**

12. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of further enhancing the level of protection and resilience of space systems and services, as well as critical value chains, in the EU and its Member States;

13. STRESSES the need for a common EU resilience framework that takes into consideration the specificities of the space sector and its industrial base, the multi-dimensional security threats affecting space infrastructures, systems and services, and the need to avoid fragmentation of the single market for space services and products, while enhancing the global competitiveness of the EU Space industry; ACKNOWLEDGES the intention of the Commission to propose, based on an impact assessment and stakeholder consultation, a legislative proposal ('EU space law') tailored to the needs of the space sector and addressing key aspects for the resilience, safety, and sustainability of space activities, which would complement the NIS 2 and CER Directives, contribute to the definition and promotion of common standards, and promote responsible behaviours in space in line with ongoing discussions in the UN; SUPPORTS close consultation with the Member States and RECALLS the need to fully respect their competences and prerogatives, including in safeguarding their national security; RECALLS the need to fully respect the principle of proportionality in the definition and implementation of security requirements, taking into account specificities in Member States' technological capabilities; UNDERLINES the role of the EU Space Programme Agency (EUSPA) as the space security monitoring structures of the EU Space Programme, STRESSES its key role in ensuring the operational security of EU satellite systems, thus contributing to the EU's strategic autonomy, and CALLS for the establishment of a better coordination between EUSPA and national security monitoring centres;

14. RECOGNISES the importance of strengthening the awareness and resilience of the EU space industry, especially since commercial actors contributing to the security and defence of the EU and its Member States could become potential targets of hostile action; and thus WELCOMES the proposal of the Commission to establish the EU Space Information Sharing and Analysis Centre (ISAC) in 2024, with the support of EUSPA, in order to facilitate the exchange of best practice on resilience measures, develop security expertise, and strengthen the resilience of the EU space industry, including new commercial actors (“New Space”);
  
15. RECOGNISES the need to further reinforce the technological sovereignty and competitiveness of the EU space sector through security of supply and unrestricted access to critical technologies relevant for space, while also preserving mutually beneficial cooperation with like-minded partners; STRESSES the importance of the Joint Task Force between the Commission (with the support of EUSPA), the European Space Agency and the European Defence Agency (EDA) under the authority of the High Representative; URGES the Commission to take into account the needs of EU space systems in the ‘Chips Act’, aiming at developing components for which critical dependencies have been identified and at supporting EU supply chains that are critical for EU space missions, in particular for the EU Space Programmes; NOTES the ongoing review of the Foreign Direct Investment screening regulation by the Commission and its relevance to the screening of FDI investment where threats to the security interests of the EU and/or the Member States have been identified;

16. UNDERLINES the importance of research and innovation activities to reduce strategic dependencies on technologies that are critical for ongoing and future space projects in the EU, as well as for the EU Space Programmes, while also enhancing the global competitiveness of the EU space industry; ENCOURAGES the Commission to develop a roadmap for future research and innovation activities, in close cooperation with Member States, EU industry, and other relevant stakeholders;
17. UNDERLINES the need to accelerate innovation on emerging and disruptive technologies, such as new access to space technologies, in-orbit servicing, inter-satellite connection, or encryption technologies;

### **III. RESPONDING TO SPACE THREATS**

18. STRESSES that enhancing space security will reinforce the security of the EU and its Member States; EMPHASISES the need to increase the possibility to use, on a case-by-case basis, all available tools, to prevent, discourage and, if necessary, appropriately respond to space threats;

19. Drawing from the experience acquired in recent years in implementing Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/698 of 30 April 2021<sup>8</sup>, INVITES the High Representative to reinforce the Space Threat Response Architecture, and explore additional responses such as statements and preventive, stabilising and cooperative measures under the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including, if necessary, restrictive measures; to this end, CALLS upon the High Representative, in cooperation with the Commission, for the capacity-building aspects, and the Member States, to develop a dedicated toolbox for EU joint responses to irresponsible and hostile behaviours in the space domain, in close coordination with the Member States, complementing the security frameworks already established in other strategic domains and in particular the cyber diplomacy toolbox and the hybrid toolbox, and drawing on the experience gained from the establishment of those toolboxes;

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<sup>8</sup> Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/698 of 30 April 2021 on the security of systems and services deployed, operated and used under the Union Space Programme which may affect the security of the Union, and repealing Decision 2014/496/CFSP, as last amended by Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/598 of 14 March 2023 amending Decision (CFSP) 2021/698 to include the Union Secure Connectivity Programme.

20. RECALLS that the decision to attribute any space threat to a specific third-state actor remains a sovereign political decision of the Member States based on a wide range of intelligence and information as well as technical evidence, and should be on a case-by-case basis in accordance with international law on state responsibility; UNDERLINES the need to strengthen information sharing and cooperation between Member States as well as with the European External Action Service (EEAS) in order to be able to timely obtain relevant security information and intelligence, including regarding an attribution, when possible, and to thereby enable a swift, effective, and substantiated response to space threats and hostile action in the space domain;
21. STRESSES that in order to protect EU and Member State space systems and services against threats, strategic intelligence should be complemented by robust, actionable, and timely information on security-relevant events in the space domain; HIGHLIGHTS that such space domain awareness (SDA) information is essential to support the decision leading to a response to space threats and hostile action; RECALLS that SDA is a sovereign prerogative and capacity of Member States stemming from a variety of sources and that sharing this information is a sovereign and voluntary decision by each Member State; INVITES the High Representative, Member States with relevant capabilities and assets, and the Commission, as appropriate, to define arrangements for sharing and using such SDA information, with a view to allow the Council to have an informed discussion regarding the response to a given space threat;

22. INVITES the Member States to enhance, where appropriate, civil-military cooperation in space security and defence training and exercises, and to increase European competence in exercises, design, planning, and evaluation, by leveraging the Member States' skills and capabilities; drawing on the yearly exercise on the implementation of Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/698 and on other space exercises organised by Member States and partners, CALLS upon the High Representative to establish a multi-year plan for regular cross-community and multi-level space security and defence exercises in order to test and develop the EU's response to large-scale space security incidents, with the participation of the Council, the Commission, and relevant stakeholders such as EUSPA, EU Military Staff, and EU SatCen, and relevant private actors where appropriate; INVITES the High Representative to involve the relevant working parties of the Council as appropriate, including the EU Military Committee; STRESSES that such a programme of space exercises should be interlinked with and contribute to the EU's general exercise policy;

23. In line with the Strategic Compass, STRESSES the need to invest further in mutual assistance as enshrined in the EU Treaties (Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union), consistent with the relevant principles of international law and taking into account the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States; UNDERLINES that attacks in the space domain could amount to armed aggression against one or several Member States on their territory and thus constitute grounds to invoke Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union; STRESSES the importance of increasing preparedness; INVITES the High Representative to continue the ongoing work with the Member States through regular exercises on the implementation of the article, across strategic domains, including space-related events amounting to an armed aggression against one or several Member States;

#### **IV. ENHANCING THE USE OF SPACE FOR SECURITY AND DEFENCE**

24. RECALLS that space is a critical enabler for military missions and operations as well as one of their operational domains along with land, sea, air, and cyber;



25. REITERATES the need to fully integrate the space dimension into the planning and conduct of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, and, to this end, INVITES the High Representative to develop concepts for the use of space in CSDP operational engagements, in full coherence with the EU's long-standing international commitment to strengthen the security, stability, safety, and sustainability of outer space and prevent an arms race in outer space or armed conflict in outer space;
26. STRESSES the dual-use nature of most space capabilities; RECOGNISES the need to use, and take the opportunity to further develop, services for governmental use at EU level, including for security and defence, without duplicating existing or planned capabilities at national level and fully respecting Member States' competencies on this matter, while also preserving the civil control and nature of EU Space Programmes and, at the same time, prioritising the achievement of all EU Space Programmes objectives of this MFF;

27. CALLS upon the Commission to consider the growing role of space in security and defence in the evolution of the EU Space Programmes; in this context, ENCOURAGES the Commission to further enhance synergies between the EU Space Programmes, the European Defence Fund, and Horizon Europe; ENCOURAGES the Commission to take into account security and defence users needs related to Space in close cooperation with Member States and relevant stakeholders; and CALLS upon the Commission to take into account the necessary security and defence needs and requirements in the conception and design of potential new EU space systems and services and in the upgrading of existing ones;
28. CALLS upon the EDA to identify the defence needs and requirements related to space expressed by the Member States; and ENCOURAGES Member States and the EDA to use the opportunity provided by the revision of the Capability Development Plan to set a high level of ambition for the development of collaborative space defence capabilities at EU level;

29. UNDERLINES the instrumental role of the EU SatCen in supporting the autonomous decision making of the EU and its Member States as a European autonomous capability providing products and services resulting from the exploitation of relevant space assets and collateral data; STRESSES that the Strategic Compass calls for the strengthening of the EU SatCen to boost the EU's autonomous geo-spatial intelligence capacity; UNDERLINES that its autonomy relies on a diversity of satellite imagery sources and collateral data; WELCOMES, in this context, the signing of a Joint Framework Arrangement regarding access to governmental earth observation space data for the EU SatCen as well as any relevant current and future PESCO project, such as 'Common Hub for Governmental Imagery';

30. WELCOMES the upcoming assessment of possible options for developing a potential new EU earth observation governmental service that would complement existing and planned capabilities, respond to identified needs, and take into account existing initiatives within the framework of the European Defence Fund and PESCO projects, such as EDF22 SPIDER and ‘Common Hub for Governmental Imagery’ (CoHGI); ENCOURAGES the Commission to assess long-term implementation options in close coordination with the Member States, including potentially for future earth observation capabilities in the EU and for exploring an anchor tenancy role by purchasing data and services, particularly through the EU SatCen; RECALLS that Member States should play a central role in the governance of such a potential service, both in its definition and implementation, and STRESSES the need to take into consideration the expertise and complementarity of the EU SatCen and EUSPA; ACKNOWLEDGES the Commission proposal to help define appropriate governance through a ‘pilot’ tested in Copernicus in the 2021-2027 MFF without prejudice to any decision on the future MFF, including to ensure the appropriate level of security, and to identify relevant technologies; STRESSES the need to respect the civil nature of Copernicus and to preserve its current data and information policy;

31. UNDERLINES that the provision of SDA-related information is a national responsibility; ENCOURAGES the development of additional dedicated capabilities required for SDA, such as sensors, analysis capabilities, and other technologies, collaboratively when possible, including with the financial support of the EDF; NOTES the proposal by the Commission for a pilot project to be implemented in close cooperation with the High Representative and the Member States to explore future synergies with the EU Space Surveillance and Tracking (EU SST) subcomponent; WELCOMES the PESCO projects supporting the networking of Space Surveillance Awareness capabilities among EU Member States (such as the ‘European Military Space Surveillance Awareness Network’ (EU-SSA-N)); REITERATES its support for reinforcing EU SST capabilities;
32. STRESSES that resilient PNT services such as the Galileo Public Regulated Service (PRS) are critical enablers for civilian and military actors; RECOGNISES that the provision of unlimited and uninterrupted access to PRS worldwide will strengthen the security and defence component of the EU’s PNT capabilities; HIGHLIGHTS the importance of further developing Galileo as the autonomous European Global Navigation Satellite System standard under civil control in order to be well positioned vis-à-vis other satellite navigation systems that are in use;

33. WELCOMES the development of secure and resilient communication services for governmental users through IRIS<sup>2</sup>, and, in this context, ENCOURAGES the Commission to explore, in close coordination with Member States, the potential development of additional services within the IRIS<sup>2</sup>, including for security and defence purposes; ACKNOWLEDGES ESA's contribution through its own optional programme related to secured connectivity and its role as defined in the Regulation establishing the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for the period 2023-2027;
34. STRESSES the imperative need for the EU and its Member States to ensure autonomous, reliable, safe, secure, cost-effective, and competitive access to space, including for security and defence, and therefore STRESSES the importance of sufficient launch facilities in the EU, including launchpads supporting the EU and its Member States' autonomous access to space; SUPPORTS the proposed boost for innovative, reliable, and versatile EU launcher systems which could reinforce EU access to space, in close cooperation with the ESA and without prejudice to its activities in this area, complementing existing EU launchers necessary for the launch of EU Space Programme components; STRESSES that the application of a European preference is key to achieve the objectives of the Space Regulation; ENCOURAGES the Commission to explore potential ways of mutualising the demand for European launch services and supporting the development of game-changing innovations, which is fundamental for the competitiveness of the EU launch industry; RECALLS the need to define a European strategic vision to ensure reliable cost effective autonomous access to space; INVITES the Commission to propose a comprehensive plan to ensure that its institutional needs, together with the military and security needs of Member States, are fully covered in the coming years;

35. RECALLS that collaborative work between space, security, and defence start-ups will encourage the development of emerging and disruptive technologies and highly innovative solutions for security and defence, and foster the overall competitiveness and innovation of the EU space and defence industries; UNDERLINES the need to enhance cooperation between start-ups and established industrial players, as well as promoting inclusiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises; and CALLS for making the best use of available instruments at EU level, such as the CASSINI space entrepreneurship initiative and the Defence Innovation Scheme – including ‘New Space’;
36. ENCOURAGES, in a context of skills shortages across the EU in the area of space, security and defence, the development of skills in public administration, including defence and intelligence, and in the EU industry; SUPPORTS the mapping by the EDA of space security and defence educational and training activities to support public administration, including armed forces and intelligence; INVITES the European Security and Defence College, in close coordination with Member States and the EDA, to promote the exchange of best practice, for training and development of space defence skills; WELCOMES the intention of the Commission to develop the EU Space Academy and a large-scale partnership on skills, with the support of EUSPA; and ENCOURAGES the Commission to further support regional clusters and initiatives that contribute to the enhancement of skills in the field of space security and defence;

V. **PARTNERING FOR RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOURS IN OUTER SPACE**

37. REAFFIRMS that globally-shared principles of responsible behaviours would contribute to increasing international cooperation in space, enhancing space security, committing to the mutual non-interference in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, facilitating an equitable access to outer space, and increasing transparency and confidence in the conduct of space activities; UNDERLINES that certain behaviours by states in outer space can be threatening or perceived as threatening and may lead to uncontrolled escalation, including through misunderstanding, misinterpretation, or miscalculation;



38. REAFFIRMS that, given the dual-use nature of many space systems, an approach that reduces space threats through responsible behaviours, supported by relevant monitoring capabilities, is the most pragmatic and immediate way forward to improve space security today; UNDERLINES that norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviours should be considered across the full range of space activities, thus contributing significantly to promoting security in outer space, as well as to safeguarding the stable, safe, and sustainable use of outer space for peaceful purposes; REITERATES the importance of an inclusive format and a multi-stakeholder approach, including engagement with international organisations, commercial actors, and civil society representatives, when addressing space threats to international peace and security; REAFFIRMS the readiness of EU Member States to continue working under the auspices of the UN to establish such norms, rules, and principles, building on the momentum of the latest Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviours, including on UNGA resolution 77/41; REITERATES that politically-binding commitments related to responsible behaviours do not exclude the possibility of legally binding instruments in the future, which, to be effective, must be verifiable, and cover all relevant threats;

39. CONDEMNS the conduct of destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests as a clear act of irresponsible behaviours in outer space; RESTATES the firm commitment of the EU Member States not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests pursuant to UNGA resolution 77/41 and CALLS on all States to join this commitment; REAFFIRMS that the EU Member States stand ready to work with all UN Member States to build upon this momentum to further address irresponsible behaviours;
40. REAFFIRMS the EU's and its Member States' commitment to pursue and intensify efforts to address challenges in outer space through international cooperation and collaboration, with the involvement of all UN Member States and other relevant stakeholders and UN bodies, especially in the UN First and Fourth Committees-related processes; COMMITS to continuous and constructive engagement in all relevant international organisations, while emphasising that existing international law applies, without reservation, in and with regard to outer space;

41. STRESSES the benefits of addressing space security issues as part of the EU's relevant dialogues with third countries and international organisations; WELCOMES the space security dialogues with like-minded bilateral partners and international organisations, in particular the long-standing dialogue with the US as a strategic partner; INVITES the High Representative and the Commission, in accordance with their respective roles and competences, to review the existing bilateral space security dialogues and, if necessary, to propose to initiate similar dialogues with additional countries or relevant international organisations, as well as to regularly report to the Member States on both the preparations and the outcomes of each space security dialogue, in line with the established practice;

42. In the wake of the third Joint Declaration on EU-NATO cooperation of 10 January 2023, REAFFIRMS the need to further strengthen, deepen, and expand cooperation with NATO on space in full respect of the agreed guiding principles, namely mutual openness and transparency, reciprocity and inclusiveness, as well as the decision-making autonomy of both organisations, and taking into account the need to avoid unnecessary duplications and maintain adequate coherence and interoperability between the two organisations; ENCOURAGES close cooperation between EU and NATO staff to discuss standards for space security and defence, including a glossary and definitions; INVITES the High Representative and the Commission to explore potential new areas for cooperation in the space domain, such as the inclusion of a space domain component in inclusive joint exercises, while continuing the established practice of mutual cross-briefings and reciprocal invitations to respective events; in this context, WELCOMES the ongoing work on the establishment of a structured dialogue on space between the EU and NATO at staff-to-staff level;

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

43. CALLS upon the High Representative and the Commission to implement the Space Strategy for Security and Defence in close coordination with the Member States and according to those conclusions;
44. LOOKS FORWARD to the first joint annual report in 2024 by the High Representative and the Commission on the progress achieved and potential further actions.

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