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### WORKING PAPER

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#### **WORKING DOCUMENT**

From:	European External Action Service
To:	Political and Security Committee
Subject:	Strategic Reflection on Security and Defence: Towards a "Strategic Compass" ?

With a view to a future PSC meeting, delegations will find attached the document: "Strategic Reflection on Security and Defence: Towards a "Strategic Compass" ?

## **Strategic Reflection on Security and Defence: Towards a "Strategic Compass"?**

Further to the tasking by the Council in June 2019 for a strategic reflection on security and defence, and building on the ministerial discussions during the November FAC/Defence during which the proposal for a political/strategic document - a "strategic compass" - was proposed, this paper puts forward to Member States some key considerations. It updates the earlier version, of 16<sup>th</sup> January, in light of the discussions of PSC and DPD's.

### ***Overall aim and objective***

The aim is to enable the Council to guide the further implementation of the agreed EU Level of Ambition – and ensure that the different initiatives launched in this context have the desired impact – by developing goals and setting objectives that are more specific and updated in light of the evolving security environment.

The main political reference documents lack such precision. Without reopening these framework documents as such, the aim is to 'deepen' the political guidance by the Council in order to determine more specifically what the EU needs to achieve to fulfil the EU Level of Ambition, and how to get there, using the different security and defence tools and instruments that have been set-up.

This work should not distract from the overriding need to deliver concrete output nor lower the agreed ambitions. By clarifying goals and contributing to an enhanced understanding of the underlying reasons, it should rather provide further impetus to EU security and defence efforts within the scope of the EU Treaty while identifying possible further synergies or linkages between them.

In doing so, it would contribute to the overall strategic agenda 2019-2024 as agreed by the European Council, and help leaders think and act more geopolitically in a challenging and evolving strategic context. There may also be links to the Conference on the Future of Europe.

### ***Scope of the Strategic Compass***

Consensus is emerging that the Strategic Compass document that results from the reflection process should cover the whole agreed Level of Ambition, i.e. 'security and defence', including military and civilian aspects, across the three strategic priorities derived from the EU Global Strategy, notably responding to external crises, capacity building of partners and protection the Union and its citizens<sup>1</sup>.

Within this broad scope, a key consideration flagged by Member States is to ensure that the process is 'manageable'. With this in mind, it is suggested to effectively take the remit of the June 2019 Council conclusions on security and defence to define the scope of this exercise.

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<sup>1</sup> Council conclusions on the implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence (Doc. 14149/16, 14 November 2016), in particular paras 7-10. See also the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence presented by the HR/VP/HoA (doc. 14392/16, 14 November 2016)

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### ***Threat analysis***

According to the June 2019 Council conclusions, a “shared assessment of threats and challenges” should provide the basis for this strategic reflection. Revisiting and updating our understanding of threats and challenges – and in particular our response to them – should help advance towards a common strategic culture and reinforce the political will to use EU tools and instruments in the pursuit of EU values and interests.

In order to take this forward in a constructive and non-divisive way, one key step would be to reframe it rather as a ‘mapping’ or an ‘analysis’ of security threats and challenges. Moreover, further discussion is needed on what Member States would expect from this analysis, in order to provide a useful input for the further work towards the Compass. Though the analysis itself would not need to be agreed as such (at least not ‘line by line’), it should provide a satisfactory basis for Member States to consider and ultimately agree on the policy implications it raises: what are our security and defence needs and where do we need to step up our efforts?

With this objective in mind, the threat analysis would need to cover in ‘360 degrees’ the external security threats and challenges that impact the Union, in its vicinity as well as global strategic context, including transnational threats. It should map, in an aggregated manner, and without prioritisation, the key trends, challenges and vulnerabilities that the Union faces in the short/medium term (2025/30) to enable an informed policy discussion. Additional studies, e.g. drawing on the Early Warning System, might also be solicited.

### ***Policy Implications***

The threat analysis would provide a basis to identify our security and defence needs and related policy goals and objectives, along four main clusters (for example):

- 1) Crisis management: encompassing our overall ambitions as well as a strategic perspective on CSDP as a civilian/military instrument that forms an essential part of the EU integrated response to conflicts and crises. This would not be about entering into the strategic reviews of the mission mandates as such, but rather to consolidate a political view on the role of CSDP in an evolving security context and reinforce our readiness to take action;
  - 2) Capability development and defence cooperation: providing more targeted orientations on the Union’s capability needs to fulfil its Level of Ambition in light of evolving security context. The remit should ideally be wider than CSDP operational capability ambitions and reflect the single set of forces of Member States. It should thereby give impetus to the EU different capability development tools and enhance the coherence of their output;
  - 3) Cooperation with, and support to, partners: reflecting where (and how) it would be possible to cooperate with our partners to achieve our objectives, as well as how to support the capacity building of our partners;
  - 4) Protection and resilience: focusing on enhancing our overall capacity to respond effectively to security and defence threats and challenges that the EU faces across different domains (incl. cyber, hybrid, maritime, space) as well as exploring links to technological development/Artificial Intelligence.
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Precise formats and outline will of course need to be discussed in further detail. The idea would be for the Compass to be valid for 5 to 10 years.

### ***Methodology***

Member States in the Council will be in the driving seat, discussing, drafting and eventually adopting such a political/strategic vision for the work ahead on security and defence, with the High Representative supported by the EEAS facilitating the process. Other EU institutions and bodies, notably the Commission as well as the EDA, will be associated from the outset.

The EEAS will develop, in consultation with Member States, the Commission and EDA, an interactive methodology and roadmap towards the delivery of a Strategic Compass, with a view to thematic meetings, involving Council preparatory bodies with PSC in the driving seat, supported by PMG, CivCom and EUMC, but also capital-based groups (DPD's and SPD's).

### ***Next steps***

- 1) First half 2020: Following the guidance emerging from the informal meeting of Defence Ministers on 4-5 March in Zagreb, the next formal step would be to have a tasking by the Council in May 2020, specifying the political parameters of the exercise. PSC, as well as SPD's (March) and DPD's (April), would help to prepare the ground.
- 2) Second half 2020: Development of an analysis of relevant security threats and challenges/vulnerabilities by INTCEN/SIAC. Additional studies, including by the EUISS and/or think tanks, may be required as well. The threat analysis may need to be classified.

In parallel, the focus this year will be to deliver on key milestones in the various initiatives (PESCO Strategic Review, MPCC review, CARD, Headline Goal process). These in turn may also provide useful inputs for the strategic compass, which in the future should provide a broader framework for these efforts:

- The 'political guidance' as a specific phase in the Headline Goal process is expected before the end of 2020. Based on the Progress Catalogue from the EUMC to the Council, it could identify guidance for the implementation of the existing military CSDP level of ambition. (Following the Compass, or as part of it, by 2022 a new Headline Goal could be foreseen. In the same timeframe a revised Capability Development Plan could be developed);
  - The PESCO Strategic Review process may identify key deliverables for the next PESCO phase up to 2025;
  - The CARD Report 2020 would provide an important input as regards the development of the overall European defence landscape and opportunities for cooperation;
  - As part of the work on the "Military Framework for Security and Defence", a military contribution may also be provided.
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3) 2021/early 2022: structured process to enable Member States to assess key needs/implications and policy guidelines that arise from the threat analysis:

1. First step would be to gather MS's views and inputs, e.g. via a questionnaire;
  2. Targeted reflection papers by EEAS, with Commission services and EDA where relevant, could be prepared to zoom in on key issues and facilitate dedicated discussions;
  3. By the end of 2021, the different strands need to be brought back together into a coherent framework with a view to consolidating the Strategic Compass as a document for adoption by the Council (this may be end of 2021 or first half of 2022).
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