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WORKING DOCUMENT

From:	European External Action Service
To:	Coreper II
Subject:	EEAS Scoping Paper on the new European Security Strategy – turning Europe's strengths into power - Foreign Affairs Council, 16 March 2026

Delegations will find attached the EEAS Scoping Paper on the new European Security Strategy with a view of the Foreign Affairs Council of 16 March 2026.

New European Security Strategy – turning Europe’s strengths into power

The new European Security Strategy (ESS) planned by the President of the Commission and the High Representative aims to respond to the new geostrategic era the European Union faces. Russia's continues its unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. China is increasingly weaponizing dependencies. The US is changing its focus away from Europe to other areas faster than anticipated. The rules-based international order is further deteriorating. Internal and external threats, risks and pressures are growing. The European security architecture is changing rapidly. Only by standing united and turning its strengths into power will the European Union be able to shape its own future, act independently and defend its interests in a world order marked by intensifying strategic competition and great power dynamics. The ESS aims to integrate and build on different security-related strategies launched to date, and to offer a new, coherent vision to guide the Union's policies and future expenditures.

The ESS will take a broad and comprehensive perspective on Europe's security. It aims to bring together coherently the internal and external dimensions, regional and global aspects with a 360-degree geographical approach, including relevant aspects of defence, preparedness, digital, trade and economic security, democratic resilience, infrastructures, enlargement, diplomacy, climate, etc. It will respect the roles, competences and responsibilities of Member States and EU institutions in line with the Treaties. EU-NATO complementarity will be embedded throughout the strategy in line with the agreed principles governing this essential partnership.

The ESS aims to put forward key Union objectives, ways and means to safeguard core values and interests, and thus protect the Europe that our citizens cherish: our democracy, freedom, prosperity and socio-economic model. In the new geostrategic context, this requires the EU and its Member States to harness and better leverage their collective strengths, and turn them into power: our single market, democracy and rule of law, growing defence expenditures, technological edge, our role as the world's largest donor and investor, our regulatory and standard-setting competences, etc. The aim is to redress unwanted dependencies and other vulnerabilities, enhance the EU's ability to take greater responsibility for its own security, strengthen its ability to act independently whenever necessary, while strengthening cooperation with like-minded partners – and be ready to react decisively against any threat or coercion.

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