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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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Major geopolitical shifts are challenging Europe's ability to promote its vision and defend its interests. We live in an era of strategic competition and complex security threats. We see conflicts and sources of instability increasing in our neighbourhood and beyond, often compounded by the threat-multiplier effect of climate change. Hybrid threats are growing both in frequency and impact. Interdependence is increasingly conflictual and soft power weaponised: vaccines, data and technology standards are all instruments of political competition. Our access to the high seas, outer space and the digital sphere is increasingly contested.

This more hostile security environment requires us to increase our capacity and willingness to act and strengthen our resilience. Europe cannot afford to be a bystander in a world order that is mainly shaped by others. Lack of unity, passivity, delays and poor coordination carry a real cost. The EU has to increase its presence, effectiveness and visibility on the global stage through joint efforts and investments. We must act as a strong and coherent political actor to uphold the values and principles underpinning our democracies, support international peace and security and take more responsibility for the security of Europe and its citizens.

The Strategic Compass marks a high level of ambition for our security and defence agenda by:

1. Providing a **shared assessment of our strategic environment**, the threats and challenges we face and their implications for the EU;
2. Bringing **greater coherence and a common sense of purpose** to actions in the area of security and defence that are already underway;
3. Setting out **new ways and means** to improve our collective ability to defend the security of our citizens and our Union;
4. Specifying **clear targets and milestones** to measure progress.

To that end, we commit to the following concrete priority actions in four work strands:

ACT

We need an EU able to respond to any situation. We need to be able to **act rapidly and robustly** whenever a crisis erupts, with partners if possible and alone when necessary. To that end, we will:

1. **Reinforce our civilian and military CSDP missions and operations** by providing them with more robust and flexible mandates, promoting **rapid and more flexible decision-making** and ensuring greater **financial solidarity**, while also promoting close cooperation with European-led ad hoc coalitions. We will strengthen our civilian CSDP through a new Compact allowing for a faster deployment, also in complex environments;
2. Develop an **EU Rapid Deployment Capacity**, consisting of flexible and interoperable modules, that will allow us to swiftly deploy up to 5000 troops for different types of crises;

3. Strengthen our **command and control structures**, in particular the Military Planning and Conduct Capability, and increase our readiness and cooperation through **regular live exercises**, in particular for the Rapid Deployment Capacity.

SECURE

We need to **enhance our ability to anticipate threats**, guarantee **secure access** to strategic domains and **protect our citizens**. To that end, we will:

4. Boost our **intelligence capacities**, such as the EU Single Intelligence and Analysis Capacity (SIAC) framework to enhance our situational awareness and strategic foresight;
5. Create an **EU Hybrid Toolbox** that brings together different instruments to detect and respond to a broad range of hybrid threats. In this context, we will develop a dedicated toolbox to address **foreign information manipulation and interference**;
6. Further develop the **EU Cyber Defence Policy** to be better prepared for and respond to cyberattacks; strengthen our actions in the maritime and space domains, notably by **expanding the Coordinated Maritime Presences** to other areas, starting with the Indo-Pacific, and by developing an **EU Space Strategy for security and defence**.

INVEST

We need to invest more and better in **capabilities** and **innovative technologies**, fill strategic gaps and **reduce technological and industrial dependencies**. To that end, we will:

7. **Improve our capability development and planning** to better address operational realities and new threats and challenges;
8. Seek common solutions to develop the necessary **strategic enablers** for our missions and operations, as well as **next generation capabilities in all operational domains**, such as high-end naval platforms, future combat air systems, capabilities for space-based earth observation and main battle tanks;
9. Make full use of Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund to jointly develop **cutting-edge military capabilities** and invest in **technological innovation for defence** and create a new **Defence Innovation Hub** within the European Defence Agency.

PARTNER

We need to strengthen **our cooperation with partners** to address common threats and challenges. To that end, we will:

10. **Reinforce multilateral partnerships** with NATO and the UN through more structured political dialogues as well as operational and thematic cooperation. We will also increase our cooperation with **regional partners**, including the AU, OSCE and ASEAN;
11. Boost cooperation with **bilateral partners** that share the same values and interests such as United States, Norway and Canada. Develop **tailored partnerships** in the Western Balkans, our eastern and southern neighbourhood, Africa, Asia and Latin America;
12. Develop an **EU Security and Defence Partnership Forum** to work more closely and effectively with partners to address common challenges.

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This is why this Strategic Compass sets out an ambitious but achievable plan to **strengthen our security and defence policy** by 2030. The case for a new impetus on EU security and defence is compelling: a more hostile threat environment and wider geopolitical trends call for the EU to shoulder a greater share of responsibility for its own security and that of the world.

INTRODUCTION

We live in an era of **strategic competition and complex security threats** that affect the security of our citizens and our Union. We face geopolitical shifts and growing instability, in particular on our borders. Climate change is a threat-multiplier that affects all of us. The crisis in multilateralism is leading to more and more transactional relations among states. The spectrum of threats has grown more diverse and unpredictable. After three decades of strong economic interdependence which was supposed to decrease tensions, the return to power politics is the most significant change in international relations. **Terrorism threatens the stability of many countries** and continues to challenge national security systems worldwide. **Interdependence remains important but it is increasingly conflictual and soft power weaponised**: vaccines, data and technology standards are all instruments of political competition.

The return to power politics leads major countries to argue in terms of historical rights and zones of influence, rather than adhering to internationally agreed rules and principles and uniting to promote international peace and security. The **high seas, outer space and the cyber sphere are increasingly contested domains**. Finally, our world is becoming less free with human rights and democratic values under attack – both at home and abroad. **We face a competition of governance systems accompanied by a real battle of narratives**.

This is not the world that we Europeans have chosen or prefer, but it is the one we have to face. The EU should be a stronger and more coherent political actor in this highly confrontational system. Despite the progress we have achieved over the past years, there is a major risk of being outpaced by our security environment and our competitors: a lot remains to be done for the EU to raise its global posture. **This is why we need a step change to develop a European Union that acts as a security provider**, building upon the Union's fundamental values as laid down in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. We can only do so based on a shared threat assessment and a joint commitment to action.

With this Strategic Compass, we aim to set out a **common strategic vision** for EU security and defence policy over the next 5-10 years. This will help us build a common strategic culture, strengthen our unity and solidarity and, above all, enhance our capacity and willingness to act together, to protect our interests and defend our values.

In an **uncertain world**, full of fast-changing threats and geopolitical dynamics, **this Strategic Compass will guide us by identifying clear goals in the area of EU security and defence, the means to achieve them and specific timelines along which we can measure progress**.

Concretely it:

1. Provides a **shared assessment of our strategic environment**, the threats and challenges we face and their implications for the EU;
2. Brings **greater coherence and a common sense of purpose** to actions in the area of security and defence that are already underway;
3. Sets out **new actions and means** to:
 - a. enable us to act more quickly and decisively when facing crises;

- b. secure our interests and protect our citizens by strengthening the EU's capacity to anticipate and mitigate threats;
- c. stimulate investments and innovation to jointly develop the necessary capabilities and technologies;
- d. deepen our cooperation with partners, notably the UN and NATO, to achieve common goals;

4. Specifies **clear targets and milestones** to measure progress.

This Strategic Compass commits the European Union and its Member States in a common effort to achieve concrete results. Its objectives and proposed actions are part of an EU integrated approach and are fully consistent with and complementary to existing policies to respond to external threats that affect our internal security, in particular those laid down in the European Commission's Security Union Strategy of 2020. EU policies offer considerable leverage that needs to be fully mobilised to strengthen the EU's security and defence.

1. THE WORLD WE FACE

To prepare this Strategic Compass, we conducted the first-ever comprehensive **EU Threat Analysis** in 2020. This helped develop a common understanding of the threats and challenges that the EU will face in the near future. To build a common strategic culture, we will regularly revisit the Threat Analysis, at least every 3 years, starting in 2023, or sooner if the changing strategic and security context calls for it.

The overall security landscape has become more volatile, complex and fragmented than ever due to **multi-layered threats**. Local and regional instability dynamics that feed on dysfunctional governance and contestation in our wider neighbourhood and beyond, sometimes nourished by inequalities, religious and ethnic tensions, are increasingly entangled with non-conventional and transnational threats and geopolitical power rivalry. This erodes the capacity of the multilateral system to prevent and mitigate risks and crises.

Our strategic environment

Today, the EU is surrounded by **instability** and conflicts. We face a dangerous mix of armed aggression, illegal annexation, fragile states, revisionist powers and authoritarian regimes. This environment is a breeding ground for multiple threats to European security from terrorism, violent extremism and organised crime to hybrid conflicts, instrumentalisation of irregular migration, arms proliferation and the progressive weakening of the arms control architecture. Financial instability, extreme social and economic divergences can further exacerbate such dynamics and have a growing impact on our security. All of these threats undermine EU security along our southern and eastern borders and beyond. Where the EU is not active and effective in promoting its interests, others fill the space.

Security and stability throughout the **Western Balkans** is still not a given. In this regard, it is our core interest to support Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single, united and sovereign country and take forward the EU-led Pristina-Belgrade dialogue. Tangible progress on the rule of law and reforms based on European values, rules and standards needs to continue and the European perspective is a

strategic choice, essential for all partners aspiring to EU membership. In our **eastern neighbourhood**, Ukraine, Moldova and the South Caucasus are continuously facing threats to their territorial integrity and are trapped in open and frozen conflicts. Authoritarianism in Belarus is translated into repression at home and hybrid tactics against the EU. In our **southern neighbourhood**, the crises in Libya and Syria remain unresolved, with lasting and pervasive regional consequences. The region is in particular threatened by terrorism movements, trafficking of human beings and organised crime, which affect both shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Finally, tensions in the **Eastern Mediterranean** due to unilateral actions in breach of international law, irregular migration flows and energy exploration rights remain and have the potential to escalate quickly; ensuring a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship is in the interest of both the EU and Turkey. Combined, these challenges affect the security of our citizens, our critical infrastructure and the integrity of our borders. The impact of a strongly deteriorated relationship with Russia is particularly severe in many of these theatres. Russia interferes actively through hybrid tactics, compromising the stability of countries and their democratic processes. This also has direct implications for our own security.

The future of **Africa** is of strategic importance to the EU. Given its economic and demographic growth, the African continent has considerable potential. However, ongoing conflicts, poor governance and terrorism across the continent affect our own security. This is in particular the case in Mali, the wider **Sahel region** and **Central Africa** where instability, terrorist groups, weak State structures, mercenaries and widespread poverty constitute a dangerous mix and call for sustained EU engagement. As key trade routes, stability in the **Gulf of Guinea** and the **Horn of Africa** remain a major security imperative for the EU. At the same time, we see growing geopolitical competition in Africa, with an increased presence of both global and regional actors. Some of them do not hesitate to use irregular forces in zones of instability, thereby undermining international efforts towards peace and stability.

In the wider **Middle East** and **Gulf Region**, active conflicts and persistent instability, including in the Strait of Hormuz, put our security and economic interests at risk. Addressing nuclear non-proliferation challenges in the region remains of capital importance and may also contribute to defusing tensions. Iran is likely to remain an important source of regional instability through its direct and indirect support to political and military proxies and through the proliferation and dissemination of weapons, including transfer of missiles. Putting the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) back on track is of utmost importance. The region's efforts in addressing violent extremism will also be of crucial importance for the global fight against terrorist groups such as Al Qaida and Daesh.

A new centre of global competition has emerged in the **Indo-Pacific**, where geopolitical tensions endanger the rules-based order in the region, and put pressure on global supply chains. The EU has a crucial geopolitical and economic interest to ensure that international law prevails in the maritime and other domains. China is the EU's second biggest trading partner and a necessary one to address global challenges. But there is also a growing reaction to its increasingly assertive regional behaviour.

Elsewhere in **Asia**, Afghanistan continues to pose serious security concerns for the region as well as for the European Union in terms of terrorism, the smuggling of drugs and irregular migration flows.

Certain actors, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), continue to endanger regional and international peace and security, through its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes but also increasingly through intelligence operations, cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns. Persistent older conflicts also continue to hamper the development of comprehensive pan-regional security arrangements.

Finally, with **Latin America** we share deep historical and cultural ties, as well as a commitment to multilateralism based on common fundamental principles and values. Nevertheless, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the fore socio-economic imbalances in a number of Latin American countries and, in some cases, threatened political stability. A fragile Central America and a persistent crisis in Venezuela contribute to regional divisions and strong migratory pressures, fuelling further drug related organised crime challenges and endangering peace efforts in Colombia.

Emerging and transnational threats and challenges

On top of these regional conflicts and tensions, we are also confronted at a global level with transnational threats and complex security dynamics that have a direct impact on the Union's own security.

Terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and irrespective of their origin continue to constantly evolve and pose a serious threat to peace and security, inside the EU and beyond. These include a combination of home grown terrorists, foreign fighter returnees, attacks directed, encouraged or inspired from abroad, as well as the propagation of ideologies and beliefs that lead to radicalization and violent extremism. In particular the threat from Da'esh, al-Qaeda and their affiliates remains high and continues to undermine stability in various regions, as well as the EU's security.

The **proliferation of weapons of mass destruction** is a rising threat, as witnessed by the DPRK's and Iranian nuclear proliferation crises, the repeated use of chemical weapons and the spread of ballistic missiles. Both Russia and China are **expanding their nuclear arsenal** and developing new weapon systems. Regional powers have also access to sophisticated conventional weapons, ranging from anti-access and area denial systems to ballistic and cruise missiles. These trends are happening in a context of **deconstruction of the security architecture** in Europe inherited from the Cold War, from the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe to the Open Skies Treaty and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. This normative void is directly impacting the stability and security of the EU.

State and non-state actors are using **hybrid tactics** such as cyberattacks and **disinformation**, direct **interference** in our elections and political processes, economic coercion and the instrumentalisation of irregular migration flows. The increasing misuse of law to achieve political, economic and military objectives is also a growing concern. Our competitors are not shying away from using **emerging and disruptive technologies** to take strategic advantages and to increase the effectiveness of their hybrid campaigns. Some have seized on the uncertainties created by the Covid-19 pandemic to spread harmful and false narratives.

At the same time, free and safe access to global strategic domains is more and more contested. **Cyberspace** has become a field for strategic competition, at a time of growing dependence on digital technologies. It is essential to maintain an open, free, stable and secure cyberspace. Notwithstanding the principle of the peaceful use of **outer space**, competition in this domain has strong defence implications. It is key for observation, monitoring and communication capabilities, but it is a weaponised domain, as illustrated by irresponsible behaviours of strategic competitors. **Maritime zones**, critical sea lanes of communication and several maritime chokepoints, are increasingly contested, from the Gulf of Aden to the Strait of Hormuz and beyond the Strait of Malacca.

Climate change, environmental degradation and **natural disasters** will also impact our security landscape over the next decades and are proven drivers for instability and conflict around the globe – from the Sahel to the Amazon and the Arctic region. The competition for **natural resources** such as farm land and water and the exploitation of energy resources for political purposes are concrete examples in this regard. Decarbonising and making our economies more resource-efficient and circular also come with specific security challenges, including access to critical raw materials, value chain management and sustainability, as well as economic and political shifts caused by the transition away from fossil fuels. **Global health crises** can also impose considerable strains on societies and economies, with far-reaching geopolitical implications. The Covid-19 pandemic showed that disruptions of key trade routes can put critical supply chains under pressure and affect economic security.

A contested multipolar world

The EU has been a determined supporter of **effective multilateralism** and it has sought to develop an open **rules-based international order**, based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, universal values and international law as enshrined in the UN Charter. This vision of multilateralism prevailed internationally following the end of the Cold War. Today, it has come under strong questioning, through the shattering of universal values and a lopsided use of global challenges, by those promoting a strict sovereigntist approach that constitutes in reality a return to power politics.

The present international reality is quite complex. It is based on the combination of two dynamics. On one side, a rising bipolarity between the United States and China which is structuring the international competition in virtually all areas. On the other, multipolar dynamics through which an increasing number of actors seek to expand their political space. While its progressive shift towards Asia is undeniable, the United States remains the EU's staunchest and most important strategic partner and is a global power contributing to peace, stability and democracy on our continent. China is a global power with different agendas, ambitions and capabilities that shapes international geopolitics. Russia, the EU's largest neighbour, remains an important global actor who attempts to widen its geopolitical sphere of influence based mostly on a zero-sum logic. In this context, the EU aims to play an active part as a global player by promoting its own value-based vision of a safer and more just world.

The illegal annexation of Crimea and support to the Donbass conflict since 2014 mark a watershed in our relations with **Russia**. Its actions in our neighbourhood and in other theatres contradict the EU's vision of the world and its interests. Use of hybrid tactics, cyberattacks and foreign

information manipulation and interference as well as conventional military instruments are part of the reality in dealing with Russia. This should nevertheless not be seen as a historic inevitability. The European Union remains committed to a united, long-term, and strategic European approach based on the five principles guiding the EU's policy towards Russia as agreed in March 2016. The European Union is open to a selective engagement with Russia in areas of EU interest, while pushing back on illegal, provocative and disruptive Russian acts against the EU, its Member States and third countries.

China is a partner for cooperation, an economic competitor and a systemic rival. With China, we can address matters of global concern such as climate change. China is increasingly both involved and engaged in regional tensions. As an economic competitor and systemic rival, China gains advantages through our divisions, tends to limit access to its market and seeks to promote globally its own standards. It pursues its policies including through its growing presence at sea and in space, as well as by using cyber tools. In addition, China has been substantially developing its military means and aims to have the technologically most advanced armed forces by 2049, impacting regional and global security. China's development and integration into its region, and the world at large, will mark the rest of this century. We need to ensure that this happens in a way that will contribute to uphold global security and the rules-based international order and not contradict our interests and values. This requires strong unity amongst us and working closely with other regional and global partners.

Strategic implications for the Union

All these challenges are multifaceted and often interconnected. They can affect our security at home or overseas. As a political Union of close to 450 million people, we must be able and ready to **protect our citizens, defend our shared interests and project our values**. We need to redouble our efforts to implement our **integrated approach** to conflicts and crises. We have to be bolder in how we combine our diplomatic, civil and military assets to prevent conflict, respond to crises, contribute to peacebuilding and support partners.

This task could not be more urgent. Solidarity, unity and our ambition deriving from the **EU Global Strategy** of 2016 are more vital than ever. We will strengthen our ability to respond to external conflicts and crises, build the capacities of partners and protect the EU and its citizens. While since 2016 we have reinforced our work to strengthen the EU's role in security and defence, we recognise that there is a new strategic landscape emerging that requires us to act with a **far greater sense of urgency and determination**. The moment for decisive steps is now. The cost of inaction or "business as usual" is real.

Recent geopolitical shifts remind us that the EU urgently needs to take more responsibility for its own security by acting in its neighbourhood and beyond, with partners whenever possible and alone when necessary. The strength of our Union lies in unity and solidarity. This Strategic Compass will enhance the EU's **strategic autonomy** and its ability to work with partners to safeguard its values and interests. A stronger and more capable EU in security and defence also strengthens **the transatlantic bond and NATO**, which remains the foundation of collective defence for its members. These two go hand in hand.

This Strategic Compass sets out how we will **act** and be prepared to respond to various crises and challenges. It also specifies how we should anticipate threats, **secure** our interests and protect our citizens. This in turn requires that we innovate and **invest** in technologically superior and interoperable defence capabilities and reduce technology and resource dependencies. In all these efforts, we must deepen **partnerships** where it serves EU values and interests.

2. ACT

In view of the world we face, we need to step up our efforts to prepare for future crises and threats and to project stability, in our neighbourhood and beyond. The EU's strength in preventing and addressing external conflicts and crises lies in its ability to use both military and civilian means. We must be able to **act promptly** in all operational domains: on land, at sea and in the air, as well as in cyber and outer space.

To effectively implement the EU's **integrated approach**, we will make full and coherent use of all available EU policies and instruments and maximise synergies and complementarity between internal and external security, security and development, as well as the civilian and military dimensions of our Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). We will enhance our capacity to undertake the full range of civilian and military **crisis management** tasks that are at the core of our CSDP, as mentioned in Article 43 of the Treaty on European Union.

Acting together

The EU must become faster and more effective in its ability to **decide and act**. This requires political will. While unanimity remains the norm for decision-making having military or defence implications, we need **more rapidity, robustness and flexibility** to undertake the full range of crisis management tasks.

We need to be able to respond to imminent threats or quickly react to a crisis situation outside the Union, for example a rescue and evacuation mission or a stabilisation operation in a hostile environment. To this end, we will develop an **EU Rapid Deployment Capacity** that will allow us to swiftly deploy a modular force of up to 5000 troops, including land, air and maritime components. The development of this capacity will be based on operational scenarios. It will consist of substantially modified EU Battlegroups and of Member States' other military armed forces and capabilities. The use of modules will give us greater flexibility to tailor our force to the nature of the crisis and to the requirements and objectives of the operation as decided by the Council. We will organise training and exercises within the EU framework to increase readiness and interoperability (also in line with NATO standards) of this capacity. This is key if we want to overcome the obstacles that we have faced in the past.

For an effective deployment, we commit to providing associated assets and the necessary strategic enablers, in particular strategic transport, force protection, medical assets, cyber defence, satellite communication and space-based intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. We will develop these capabilities where necessary, also based on the operational scenarios. For the command and control, we will use our pre-identified national operational Headquarters or the EU Military Planning and Conduct Capability once it reaches full operational capability. We will ensure

that the use of more flexible decision-making arrangements and an extended scope of common costs (including the costs of exercises) contribute to the rapid and efficient deployability of this capacity.

More broadly, we must also strive for greater flexibility in our **decision-making**, without compromising on political and financial solidarity. We will therefore use the potential afforded by the EU Treaties, including constructive abstention. We will in particular decide on more flexible modalities for implementing Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union to allow a group of willing and able Member States to plan and conduct a mission or operation within the EU framework.

More **robust, flexible and modular** CSDP civilian and military missions and operations should allow us to adapt swiftly to new threats and challenges and increase their effectiveness. They should for example be able to better accompany and support partners' security and defence forces, as well as to provide training and advice on structural reforms. Our CSDP missions and operations and European-led *ad hoc* coalitions acting in the same or adjacent theatres should mutually reinforce each other, in line with their respective mandates, through operational coordination, logistical support, intelligence sharing and joint medical evacuation capacities. This means developing closer cooperation in theatre in these areas, for example in the Sahel, Horn of Africa and Strait of Hormuz. European-led *ad hoc* coalitions could benefit from the EU's political support and build on assistance measures funded through the European Peace Facility.

With the maritime domain becoming increasingly contested, we commit to further asserting our interests at sea and enhancing the EU and Member States maritime security, including by improving the interoperability of our naval forces through live exercises and by organising European port calls. Building on the ongoing experience in the Gulf of Guinea [and recently in the North-West of the Indian Ocean], we will expand our **Coordinated Maritime Presences** to other areas of maritime interest to the EU and seek to associate relevant partners where appropriate. We will also consolidate, and further develop as appropriate, our two maritime operations which are deployed in the Mediterranean and off the Somali Coast - maritime areas of crucial strategic interest for the EU.

We will reinforce cooperation and coordination in the **air domain** by further developing our ability to undertake for the first time EU air security operations, including air support, rescue and evacuation, surveillance and disaster relief tasks. To facilitate the coordinated use of military air assets in support of CSDP missions and operations, we will also strengthen our collaboration and partnership with EU and multilateral structures and initiatives in the air domain, such as the European Air Transport Command.

Through our **civilian CSDP missions**, we provide an essential contribution to rule of law, civil administration, police and security sector reform in crisis areas. They are also crucial in the EU's wider response to security challenges through non-military means, including those linked to irregular migration, hybrid threats, terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism.

The **civilian CSDP Compact** helps us to further develop our civilian missions so that they can swiftly and effectively respond to existing and evolving threats and challenges, undermining the executive, judicial or legislative system in crisis areas, and addresses critical shortfalls. We will ensure that civilian missions are able to deploy more rapidly in line with the Civilian CSDP

Compact. More specifically, we will be able and ready to deploy a mission with 200 civilian experts within 30 days, making full use of the key equipment and logistical services offered by the Strategic Warehouse and the Mission Support Platform. We will increase the flexibility of civilian missions, including by providing specialised teams that include experts on tasks such as community policing, human resources management, counter-terrorism and border management. We will further strengthen our civilian CSDP through a new Compact that will provide objectives on the type, number and size of civilian missions, elements for a structured civilian capability development process, as well as synergies with other EU instruments.

Greater cooperation for mutual benefit between CSDP civilian and military operational engagements and the EU's **justice and home affairs** actors, such as EUROPOL, EUROJUST, CEPOL and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), is necessary. We can build on the positive experiences, such as in Libya, the Sahel or the crime information cell established in the EU's naval operation in the Mediterranean. To this end, we aim to increase synergies between justice and home affairs actors and CSDP missions and operations, in line with EU priorities, including through tailored sequential or plug-in deployments. We will also increase cooperation with national justice and home affairs actors.

We need to further strengthen our civilian and military **command and control** structures. We will ensure that the Military Planning and Conduct Capability is fully able to plan, control and command non-executive and executive tasks and operations, as well as live exercises. In this context, we will ramp up personnel contributions and ensure that we have the necessary communication systems, as well as required facilities. The Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability will also be strengthened to be able to plan and conduct additional future civilian missions. Cooperation and coordination between the military and civilian structures will be reinforced through the Joint Support Coordination Cell.

We remain strongly committed to promoting and advancing **human security** and the respect of and the compliance with **International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law** and the protection of civilians, including humanitarian workers, in all conflict situations, as well as to further developing the EU due diligence policy in this regard. We must stay firm and prevent all attempts to dismantle and undermine international law.

We are committed to delivering on the EU objectives on **women, peace and security**. Tackling gender inequalities and gender-based violence is a critical aspect of building resilience to security threats at community level. EU external action, including civilian and military missions and operations, should actively contribute to empowering women and to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict setting, based on the rights and special needs of women and children. We will further promote **gender equality** and systematically mainstream a gender perspective in all civilian and military CSDP actions, focusing on increasing the number of women in all functions, including leadership positions.

Prepare together

To increase our preparedness we will more systematically conduct scenario-based **advance planning**, enhance early warning and adapt operational scenarios that correspond to the shifting threats and challenges we face. Combining geospatial as well as all other **intelligence**, advance planning will result in generic civilian and military plans that will be adapted and maintained as scenarios evolve. These plans will be used for the planning and conduct phases of crisis response.

The Union can only be effective with sufficient and well-trained civilian and military personnel at its disposal. We have to boost our capacities, critical enablers and equipment in order to close the gap between our level of ambition and available **resources**. A more transparent and structured picture of available civilian and military personnel for CSDP missions and operations through early political consultations is necessary to meet our ambitions, and facilitate a **fair share** of contributions to military missions and operations. We undertake to incentivise the **force generation** for military missions and operations, for example by expanding the scope of common costs under the European Peace Facility and by enhancing transparency and predictability in the rotation of troops. To enhance the effectiveness of our non-executive missions, we recognise the need to extend the deployment period of the missions' senior officers. These efforts will contribute to the fulfilment of the relevant commitments made under Permanent Structured Cooperation by the participating Member States.

Readiness and **interoperability** are crucial elements of our response to threats and strategic competition. Frequent civilian and military **live exercises** in all domains will help us to substantially boost our readiness, foster interoperability and support a common strategic culture. Live exercises in an EU framework, with the progressive involvement of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability will shape the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity in particular, and more generally will reinforce our posture, add to our strategic communication and strengthen interoperability, including with partners.

Our strategic competitors should not question the EU's common resolve to respond to aggression and malicious activities against any one of our Member States in accordance with Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union. While NATO is and will remain the foundation of collective defence for its members and acknowledging the specific character of national security and defence policies, we will continue to invest in our **mutual assistance** and **solidarity**, in particular through frequent exercises.

We need to ensure that our armed forces are protected and mobile when they act. We will strive for the rapid and seamless movements of personnel and equipment for missions, operations and live exercises by strengthening **military mobility** within and beyond the Union, in cooperation with NATO and other partners. This calls for improvements of the dual use transport infrastructure and cross-border procedures. We will also invest in the digitalisation of our armed forces and develop cutting-edge, energy efficient capabilities that guarantee our ability to respond quickly and operate in non-permissive environments.

Objectives

We aim to become a more assertive security and defence actor by enabling more robust, rapid and

3. SECURE

Our strategic competitors are challenging us with a broad set of tools and testing our **resilience** with the aim to diminish our **security** and actively undermine our secure access to the high seas, in the cyber and space domains. We are increasingly confronted with threats of a hybrid nature. Furthermore, transnational threats such as terrorism and arms proliferation remain a continuous challenge. We need to bolster our resilience by better anticipating, detecting and responding to such threats. The regular and structured review of our Threat Analysis will help in this regard, but it is only one element.

Strengthening early warning, intelligence picture and our secure communications

We will invest more in shared analysis to increase our **situational awareness** and **strategic foresight**, building on our Early Warning System and horizon scanning mechanism. We will strengthen our intelligence-based situational awareness and relevant EU capacities, notably in the framework of the EU **Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity**, as well as the EU Satellite Centre. This will also bring us closer to a **common strategic culture** and contribute to the EU's credibility as a strategic actor. We need to maintain our excellence in ensuring autonomous EU decision-making, including based on geospatial data. We will reinforce the role of the **EU Intelligence Centre** as analysis capacity and single entry point for Member States' civilian Intelligence and Security Services. This will facilitate the exchange of strategic intelligence to help us better respond to the level of challenges we are facing and provide improved services to decision-makers across EU Institutions and Member States.

As its institutions are subject to an increasing number of cyberattacks or attempts to intrude their systems, the EU needs to enhance the protection of its most critical processes, assets and information and ensure that it can rely on robust and trustworthy information and communication systems. A strengthened intelligence picture will also require enhanced **secure communications**. To this end, we will streamline security rules and regulations as well as bolster the common approach by the Member States, EU Institutions, bodies and agencies, as well as CSDP missions and operations, to the protection of information, infrastructure and communication systems. This will require investments in state-of-the-art technical equipment, infrastructure and expertise. Building on the EU Cybersecurity Strategy, we call upon the EU institutions, agencies and bodies to adopt additional standards and rules on information and cyber security, as well as on the protection of EU classified information and sensitive non-classified information, thus facilitating secured exchanges with Member States.

Hybrid threats, cyber diplomacy and foreign information manipulation and interference

We will enhance our **resilience** to counter **hybrid threats**, such as cyberattacks and foreign information manipulation and interference. State and non-state foreign actors are constantly refining their tactics, techniques and procedures, such as the instrumentalisation of irregular migration, lawfare, as well as coercion targeting our economic and energy security. Existing and possible new EU tools will therefore be brought together within a broader **EU Hybrid Toolbox**. This toolbox should provide a framework for a coordinated response to hybrid campaigns affecting the EU and

its Member States and could comprise for instance preventive, cooperative, stabilisation and restrictive measures. Our response requires coherence and cohesion between our policies and needs to be based on an updated common understanding and assessment of these threats. The Hybrid Fusion Cell within the EU Intelligence Centre will contribute to these efforts, by providing foresight and situational awareness. As part of this broader EU Hybrid Toolbox, we need to bolster our **societal and economic resilience** and protect our democracies as well as EU and national electoral processes. We will also create **EU Rapid Hybrid Response Teams** adaptable to the threat and drawing on relevant sectorial expertise to support Member States and partner countries' ability to counter hybrid threats. We will ensure synergies and explore further avenues for counter-hybrid cooperation with NATO.

We must also be able to swiftly counter cyberattacks, including ransomware attacks. We will strengthen the **EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox** and make full use of all its instruments, including preventive measures and sanctions on external actors for malicious cyber activities against the Union and its Member States. We will contribute to the EU's Joint Cyber Unit to enhance joint situational awareness between EU institutions and Member States.

We will respond to foreign information manipulation and interference, in full coherence with EU internal policies, by establishing a common understanding of the threat as well as further developing a range of instruments to effectively detect, analyse and address it and impose costs on the perpetrators of such activities. To this end, we will set in motion the development of the **EU toolbox to address and counter foreign information manipulation and interference**, including in our CSDP missions and operations. Building also on the European Democracy Action Plan, it will strengthen our response options, our resilience capacities and cooperation within the EU, via the Rapid Alert System. We will continue to work with like-minded partners, such as NATO, the G7, civil society and private industry and increase our efforts within the UN framework.

Securing our access to strategic domains

We will further develop the **EU's Cyber Defence Policy** to protect, detect, defend and deter against cyberattacks. It will boost research and innovation, stimulate the EU's industrial base and promote education and training to ensure that we are ready to act. It will increase cooperation among the EU's and Member States' cyber defence actors and develop mechanisms for leveraging capabilities at the EU level, including in the context of CSDP missions and operations. It will also strengthen cooperation with like-minded partners in the area of cyber defence, notably NATO. A new **European Cyber Resilience Act** will also increase our common approach to cyber infrastructure and standards. We will work towards the establishment of a European infrastructure of Security Operations Centres.

In line with the 2020 EU Cybersecurity Strategy, we will develop the Union's **cyber posture** by enhancing our ability to prevent cyberattacks through capacity building, capability development, training, exercises, enhanced resilience and by responding firmly to cyberattacks against the Union, its institutions and its Member States. Through regular exercises in the cyber domain we will contribute to further increasing solidarity and mutual assistance. We will strengthen our **cyber intelligence capacities** to enhance our cyber resilience, also providing effective support to our civilian and military CSDP missions and operations, as well as our armed forces. We recognise that

enhancing our cybersecurity is a way to increase the effectiveness and security of our efforts on land, in the air, at sea and in outer space.

Our freedom of action depends on safe, secure and autonomous access to the **space domain**. We need to be prepared for a more competitive and contested space environment. Due to our increasing dependency on space systems and services, we are more vulnerable to irresponsible and threatening behaviour by strategic competitors. The growing number of objects in orbit and space debris are also increasing risks and tensions. The EU Space Programme and other space infrastructure of the Union and its Member States contribute to our resilience. They also offer key services that substitute or complement ground infrastructures for earth observation, satellite navigation or telecommunication. EU space systems should offer global connectivity to security and defence actors, including through an EU space-based global secure communication system.

Recognising that the EU's space assets are under civil control, and acknowledging the importance of the EU Space Programme, there is a pressing need to complement the current space strategy and enhance the security and defence dimensions of the Union in space. A new **EU Space Strategy for security and defence** will help us build a common understanding of space-related risks and threats, develop appropriate responses to react better and faster to crises and also make full use of the benefits and opportunities linked to the space domain.

We will continue to invest in **space situational awareness** to better understand and reduce space-based threats. We will strengthen dual-use innovation and invest in capability development in order to ensure the Union's autonomous access to space. We will protect space supply chains and invest in critical space technologies. We will work closely together with partners in reducing threats in line with ongoing efforts in the United Nations on the development of norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour in outer space. We will work towards a common EU approach on space traffic management. We will conduct exercises to test the resilience of our space assets, and identify necessary means to address vulnerabilities to react quickly and firmly to space-related threats in case of emergency or crisis. Further to the validation of the Galileo threat response mechanism, we will expand it to other components of the EU Space Programme.

Building on an update of the EU Maritime Security Strategy, we will further invest in our **maritime security** and presence, and thus ensure unfettered access to the high seas and sea lanes of communication, as well as respect for the international law of the sea. Provocative unlawful acts at sea, criminal activities such as piracy, disputes on maritime areas and excessive claims, access denial and hybrid threats all undermine our maritime security. In order to protect our maritime interests and critical maritime infrastructure, we will enhance our capacity to collect and provide accurate information and intelligence to bolster situational awareness, including through information sharing between civilian and military actors. To this end, we will also make best use of the framework of Permanent Structured Cooperation. We will further develop the **Coordinated Maritime Presences** mechanism, as well as reinforce interactions and coordination between our CSDP naval operations and relevant actors. To increase our maritime readiness and resilience, we will organise regular naval exercises of Member States' navies and coast guards. We will also make full use of our partnership policy in the maritime domain, for example by port calls, training and exercises as well as capacity building.

Countering terrorism

We will strengthen our response to better **prevent and counter terrorism**. Using our CSDP instruments as well as other tools, we will support partner countries, including through diplomatic engagement, programmes for preventing and countering violent extremism and cooperation in the area of rule of law. We will step up our engagement with strategic partners, including the UN and in other multilateral fora, such as the Global Counter Terrorism Forum and the Global Coalition against Da'esh. We will also tackle new developments, such as the use of new technologies for terrorism financing and the dissemination of terrorist content online. We will further strengthen our network of counter-terrorism experts in EU Delegations.

Promoting non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control

We will uphold, support and invest in the multilateral **non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament** framework. We will continue to support the centrality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We need to increase our capacities to control the transfer of scientific knowledge where necessary. This entails protecting and reinforcing existing export control regimes. A coordinated approach with partners is essential in this regard.

Regarding arms control, the EU and its Member States will intensify their exchanges and efforts on possible arms control solutions taking into account their security interests and in close coordination with NATO and other main stakeholders, such as the United States. We will further work on a possible EU contribution to that process. We will continue to call for post-New START agreements with further arms control and reduction of arsenals by the States with the most important nuclear arsenal, transparency on nuclear doctrines and strategic risk reduction measures.

Enhancing resilience to climate change, disasters and emergencies

Climate change and environmental degradation are not only threats in themselves, but risk multipliers. Global warming leads to more **frequent and extreme weather events** and **natural disasters**, while degradation of eco-systems across the globe increases vulnerability and exposure. This adds to the potential for social, economic, political instability and conflict in fragile countries. Climate change and environmental degradation impact on key energy infrastructure, agricultural activities and scarcity of natural resources, making existing social inequalities deeper and exposing vulnerable communities to new types of risks. Decarbonising economies may have social, economic and political impacts that can amplify conflict-prone situations. We are assessing the different effects of climate change and environmental degradation on global and regional security, as well as on our armed forces and our CSDP missions and operations. We will adapt the Union's security and defence sector and our CSDP engagements by increasing energy and resource efficiency and reduce the environmental footprint in line with the Union's goal of carbon-neutrality by 2050 under the European Green Deal, without reducing operational effectiveness. We will also mainstream climate change and environmental considerations throughout our civilian and military CSDP missions and operations and we will strengthen our analysis capacities and early warning systems as to the specific security challenges triggered by the transition towards a decarbonised, resource-efficient and circular economy.

An integrated approach to respond to major crises is essential. The Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the crisis in Afghanistan, underscored the importance of developing an increased ability to **rescue and evacuate** our citizens when they are at risk beyond our borders. It also highlighted the important role the armed forces can play during **complex crises**. The military actors in the Member States can mobilise significant assets in support of civilian disaster response actors in areas such as logistical, medical and security support and infrastructure. Building on existing EU Military Staff structures, such as the EU Movement Planning Cell, and Commission humanitarian and disaster relief mechanisms, we will improve military assistance capabilities as well as effective coordination between civil and military authorities at national and Union level. This will ensure that, as a last resort, military actors stand ready to assist civil authorities during future emergencies and disasters. We will also review our consular support mechanisms to improve assistance to Member States in

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their efforts to protect and rescue their citizens abroad, as well as to support our EU Delegations when they need to evacuate personnel. Working with the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism, we will support civilian disaster relief efforts and we need to ensure that we are able to safely evacuate our citizens from locations hit by natural and man-made disasters. We will also increase coordination with the UN and NATO in this context.

Objectives

We aim to progressively enhance our resilience to hybrid threats by developing our Hybrid Toolbox. This also means that we will fortify our cyber defence and cybersecurity and strengthen our capacity to dissuade and counter foreign information manipulation and interference. Additionally, we must be able to secure our access to and presence on the high seas and in outer space. We aim to further increase our resilience against climate-related risks and human-made and natural disasters while striving towards a carbon neutral EU presence on the ground. We will also strengthen our ability to rescue and evacuate our citizens when they are at risk beyond our borders.

Intelligence and secure communication

- By 2023, the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity will review the **EU Threat Analysis** in close cooperation with national intelligence services. Such updates will be conducted on regular basis, at least every 3 years.
- By 2025, we will strengthen our **Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity** by enhancing the resources and capacities. By 2025, we will also strengthen the **EU Satellite Centre** to boost our autonomous geo-spatial intelligence capacity.
- To facilitate exchange of information, we call upon EU institutions, agencies and bodies to adopt in 2022 additional **standards and rules to ensure cybersecurity and security of information**.

Hybrid threats, cyber diplomacy and foreign information manipulation and interference

- By 2022, we will develop our **EU Hybrid Toolbox** that should provide a framework for a coordinated response to hybrid campaigns affecting the EU and its Member States and could comprise for instance preventive, cooperative, stability and restrictive measures. It will bring together existing and possible new instruments, including the creation of EU Rapid Hybrid Response Teams to support Member States and partner countries' ability to counter hybrid threats.
- By the end of 2022, we will further strengthen the **Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox**, notably by exploring additional response measures.
- In 2022, we will develop a **Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox**. This will strengthen our ability to respond to the threat, including by imposing costs on perpetrators. We will further enhance the EU's strategic communication capabilities. By 2023, we will create an appropriate mechanism to systematically collect data on incidents, facilitated by a dedicated Data Space, to develop a common understanding of foreign information manipulation and interference. By 2024, all CSDP missions and operations will be fully equipped with capabilities and resources to deploy relevant instruments of this toolbox

4. INVEST

For the EU to act and protect effectively, we need to regularly increase our defence spending and invest more in capabilities and innovative technologies, both at the EU and national levels. We must be bolder if we want to fill **critical capability gaps**, overcome fragmentation, achieve full interoperability of our forces and strengthen a resilient, competitive and innovative European Defence Technological and Industrial Base throughout the Union, which also ensures cross border participation of small and medium enterprises. We recognise that investing more in collaborative capability development ensures more efficiency by increasing economies of scale and greater effectiveness when acting. It also supports European innovators and manufacturers. Reducing **strategic dependencies**, the vulnerability of our value chains, and enhancing our technological sovereignty are critical if we are to meet the challenges of a more dangerous world and be more resilient.

Strategic orientations

In line with our agreed level of ambition, we will work together to adapt our military forces and civilian capacities so that they are capable to act rapidly, contribute to securing our interests and values, enhancing our resilience and protecting the Union and its citizens. To this end, we will further develop **full spectrum forces** that are **agile** and **mobile**, **interoperable**, **technologically advanced**, **energy efficient** and **resilient**. In line with the single set of forces principle, these forces remain in the hands of the Member States and can also be deployed outside the EU framework.

We will adapt the EU's **defence capability planning and development processes**, notably by revising the capability planning **scenarios** of the Headline Goal process, to better reflect operational realities, strategic foresight and provide the necessary capabilities for CSDP missions and operations. Such scenarios include military rapid deployment in a non-permissive environment, as well as to responding to hybrid threats, securing access to strategic domains such as high seas, cyber and space, and providing military assistance to civilian authorities. The results of the Headline Goal process will continue to be an essential contribution to the Capability Development Plan, which encompasses future defence capability trends and technological perspectives.

We must ensure that all EU defence initiatives and capability planning and development tools are better used in **national defence planning**. We will continue to ensure that the results of these processes remain coherent with that of the respective NATO processes. This will enhance the readiness, robustness and interoperability of our single set of forces.

To increase the effectiveness of our civilian CSDP missions, we will develop a civilian capacities and capability process to better structure and collectively address the needs for civilian CSDP missions, based on scenarios that also respond to new threats. Our ability to provide equipment and services for civilian CSDP missions has improved with the introduction of the **civilian Warehouse** and the **mission support platform**. In addition to ensuring high quality and well trained staffing, we will ensure that necessary equipment can be delivered to civilian missions even more rapidly, including equipment that allows missions to operate in less permissive environments, by improving financial management flexibility.

Coherent and ambitious capabilities

In a bilateral or multilateral framework, a number of Member States have embarked on the development of key **strategic capability projects**, such as a next generation aircraft system, a Eurodrone, a new class of European naval vessel and a main ground combat system. These will make a tangible difference to European defence in the future and will lead to convergence over time. The implementation of the recommendations agreed under the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence will be essential in this regard.

In addition to investing in future capabilities and innovation, we need to make better use of collaborative capability development and pooling endeavours, including by exploring tasks specialisation between Member States. We will build on successful examples such as the European Multinational Multi-role Tanker and Transport Fleet.

In the EU framework and notably through Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund, we are already developing armoured vehicles, missile systems and artillery, patrol corvettes, unmanned air and maritime systems, electronic warfare capabilities, space surveillance, cyber defence and high-tech training systems. We will invest further in **strategic enablers**, and more generally in the capabilities necessary to conduct the full range of missions and operations as set out in our agreed level of ambition. While we have already come a long way, we will enhance our efforts to mitigate critical capability shortfalls such as strategic airlift, space communication assets, amphibious capabilities, medical assets, cyber defence capabilities and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities and Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems.

We need to reduce fragmentation and develop next generation capabilities. For this purpose, we commit to taking forward the recommendations of the first-ever **Coordinated Annual Review on Defence** Report published in 2020, including the agreed six capability focus areas that would benefit from enhanced defence cooperation among Member States. These are Main Battle Tank, Soldier Systems, European Patrol Class surface ship, Anti Access Area Denial capacities and Countering Unmanned Aerial Systems, Defence in Space and Enhanced Military Mobility.

To act rapidly and protect our citizens, we will work together to overcome critical gaps. We will make full use of Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund to develop interoperable high-end systems and advanced technologies. We commit to specifically developing the following strategic capabilities through collaborative projects:

- In the **Land domain**, the ability for the Union to conduct crisis management operations and ensure its technological advantage in the field, including in high intensity threat environment, will be key. A comprehensive land capability cluster will be initiated leading to the upgrade, modernisation and progressive replacement of current major platforms and related logistic systems. The focus areas Soldier Systems and Main Battle Tank will be important contributions to these efforts.
- In the **Maritime domain**, to ensure a more assertive Union presence at sea as well as the ability to project power, high-end naval platforms, including unmanned platforms for surface and

underwater control are required. The focus area European Patrol Class Surface Ship will be an important step in this direction.

- In the **Air domain**, establishing and maintaining our advantage requires the development of next-generation capabilities, notably future combat air systems as well as air defence systems. We will progressively integrate the foreseen future combat air systems, including Remotely Piloted Air Systems, into existing fleets of combat air systems in an interoperable manner. Efforts on key enablers also need to be pursued, notably the Strategic Airlift capability. The focus area Anti Access Area Denial capacities and Countering Unmanned Aerial Systems contributes to the air defence dimension of these efforts.
- In the **Space domain**, we will develop new sensors and platforms at cutting edge technology allowing the Union to improve its access to space and protect its space-based assets. This entails notably the development of Space Based Earth Observation, as well as technologies for Space Situational Awareness and space based communication services, which are key to providing independent decision-making. The focus area Defence in Space represents a first step in this direction.
- In the **Cyber domain**, our forces need to operate in a coordinated, informed and efficient manner. We will therefore develop and make intensive use of new technologies, notably quantum computing, Artificial Intelligence and Big Data, to achieve comparative advantages, including in terms of cyber responsive operations and information superiority. Cyber defence is paramount in ensuring that the focus area Enhanced Military Mobility unfolds its full potential as essential enabler.

We commit to intensifying our cooperation on capability development, particularly through **Permanent Structured Cooperation**. Concretely, this means that by 2025 Member States participating in Permanent Structured Cooperation must fulfil all more binding commitments that they have undertaken. In 2025, one third of 60 ongoing Permanent Structured Cooperation projects will deliver the expected capability and meet their objectives. Beyond these coming concrete results, our goal is to go further by implementing the agreed capability priorities and developing new ambitious projects. We will closely review the fulfilment of these commitments in order to be able to agree on new commitments in 2025 to further deepen defence cooperation.

Harnessing the full potential of EU funding instruments, in particular the **European Defence Fund**, is key to boosting cooperation and capabilities so that defence industrial cooperation within the EU becomes the norm. Rather than lowering national defence expenditure, this will maximise the potential of broader EU financial tools. This also means that we should be prepared to match the increased ambition at Union level with the adequate long term financial weight of the European Defence Fund. We will fully exploit the potential of synergies with other EU financial instruments, such as Horizon Europe, Digital Europe Programme, Connecting Europe Facility, the EU Space Programme, the European Innovation Council and InvestEU. To bolster the competitiveness of the EU defence industry, we will explore ways to stimulate joint procurement of the equipment developed with EU funding that has been manufactured within the EU.

We will maximise **coherence between the EU defence related initiatives** – Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, Permanent Structured Cooperation and European Defence Fund. In this regard, the High Representative/Vice-President/Head of the European Defence Agency will chair annual Defence Ministerial meetings on EU defence initiatives addressing capability development, making full use of existing formats.

Innovation, disruptive technologies and reducing strategic dependencies

Emerging and disruptive technologies, such as **Artificial Intelligence**, quantum computing, advanced propulsion, bio- and nano-technology and new materials and industrial capacities are re-shaping military affairs and defence markets. We are already collectively investing in **defence innovation** by combining civil, space and defence research and developing new standards. However, we have to step up our efforts both at the national level and through a more ambitious use of EU instruments. We will ensure an ambitious implementation of the Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries. We will also establish a **Defence Innovation Hub** within the European Defence Agency, working in partnership with the Commission, to increase and coordinate cooperation on defence innovation among Member States. In this regard, we will ensure synergies with the European Innovation Council and the European Defence Fund actions in the area of disruptive technologies.

An **innovative, competitive and resilient European Defence Technological and Industrial Base** which guarantees security of supply and cutting-edge technologies is key for employment, trade, investment and research in the EU. We have to ensure that it can fully and rapidly benefit from civil innovation cycles and remove existing obstacles. We will also invest in dual-use technologies. This is essential, as our strategic competitors are rapidly investing in critical technologies and challenging our **supply chains** and access to resources. As the technological landscape transforms, our new cooperative frameworks give us a chance not to repeat the fragmentation and inefficiencies of the past and pursue a European approach from the outset. We will boost research, technology development and innovation and reduce our strategic dependencies in critical technologies and value chains, [on the basis of a Roadmap on Security and Defence Technologies proposed by the European Commission].

Investing in innovation and making better use of civilian technology in defence is key to enhancing our **technological sovereignty**, reducing strategic dependencies and preserving intellectual property in the EU. Through the Observatory on Critical Technologies we will continue to monitor and identify such strategic dependencies in the security and defence sector. The EDA's Action Plan on Emerging and Disruptive Technologies will also contribute to these efforts. Strengthening the resilience of our supply chains and industries' access to private funding will be necessary for our European Defence Technological and Industrial Base. Making full use of the Union's framework and national mechanisms for the **screening of foreign direct investment** remains critical to identify and mitigate risks to security and public order, including related to investments in the defence sector. National screening mechanisms should be in place in all Member States as early as possible. In addition, tools to counter foreign extra territorial measures and attempts at economic coercion impacting EU strategic interests and industry should be further strengthened. In the area of cybersecurity, we will swiftly operationalise the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre to

develop a strong European **cyber industrial ecosystem**, support companies specialising in cybersecurity and further increase cybersecurity and cyberdefence skills at EU level.

The development of **emerging and disruptive technologies** is key to maintaining a military advantage, including through the dedicated budget under the European Defence Fund. Our competitors are increasingly using strategic technologies and data without respecting existing **international norms and regulation**. We therefore need a better analytical hold on emerging and disruptive technology trends and dependencies and how they are being increasingly used by strategic competitors. To this end, we will use the Observatory on Critical Technologies of the Commission to coordinate and get a full understanding of critical dependencies, such as semiconductors, cloud and edge technologies, quantum computing and artificial intelligence. In this regard, we will also build on the EDA's work on Key Strategic Activities. We will discuss options to mitigate risks for the security of supply and collectively step up our efforts by commonly investing into and protecting technologies that are critical for security and defence. We will work with all partners to promote the relevant ethical and legal standards. In this regard, our cooperation in the UN framework will be essential, especially when defining and applying common norms in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Finally, we need to harness innovation to enhance the **energy efficiency** of the defence sector, including CSDP missions and operations, without reducing operational effectiveness. We will develop common benchmarks and standards for the increased use of renewable energy sources and the resilience of defence-related critical infrastructure. A special emphasis will be placed on innovation and standards that can help reduce the environmental footprint of armed forces and create possibilities to re-use valuable components and scarce materials.

Objectives

We aim to reduce critical military and civilian capability gaps. We will also strengthen our European Defence Technological and Industrial Base throughout the Union. In line with the binding commitments under Permanent Structured Cooperation, defence spending will be regularly increased in real terms. With a view to the next EU budgetary cycle in 2028, we will increase and leverage collaborative defence investment at the EU level, including Research and Technology, through the European Defence Fund. We will invest in critical and emerging technologies and innovation, reduce our strategic dependencies, secure supply chains and strengthen the protection of our intellectual property.

Capability development

- By 2023, we will **revise our Headline Goal process** and bring military capability development closer to operational needs, which provides an essential contribution to the Capability Development Plan.
- As of 2022, **annual Defence Ministerial meetings on EU defence initiatives addressing capability development** will be organised and chaired by the High Representative / Vice-President of the Commission / Head of the European Defence Agency, making full use of existing formats.
- By 2024, a **civilian capability development process** will be set-up to assess the capability needs, develop requirements, conduct a gap analysis and review periodically the progress made in line with the new Civilian CSDP Compact.

Strategic capabilities

- We commit to using our EU defence initiatives to substantially fill by 2025 critical gaps on **strategic enablers**, in particular linked to the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity, notably strategic airlift, space communication assets, amphibious capabilities, medical assets, cyber defence capabilities and Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance capacities.
- Within this decade and beyond, we will focus our capability development efforts on next generation capabilities, including at system and subsystem level along the focus areas identified by CARD:
 - In the **Land domain**, we will modernise Soldiers Systems as the core of individual force protection and operational effectiveness across all types of operations, and develop a Main Battle Tank system as a next-generation capability for the Union in conventional high intensity as well as crisis management operations.
 - In the **Maritime domain**, in view of enhancing maritime situational awareness and force protection, we will replace coastal and offshore patrol vessels by developing digitally networked high-end naval platforms including naval

5. PARTNER

Partnerships are an essential instrument to support the EU's ambition to be global strategic player. Partners will also benefit from a strong EU in security and defence. They can help us **uphold rules-based international order and effective multilateralism**, with the UN at its core, set international norms and standards and contribute to peace and security around the world. We will bolster tailored partnerships where they are **mutually beneficial** and serve EU values and interests, particularly when there is a shared commitment to an integrated approach to conflict and crises, capacity building and resilience. We have a long track-record of working alongside **partners** and we actively seek their participation in civilian and military CSDP missions and operations.

It is paramount that our strategic partnerships deliver on their potential and that we address the profound security shifts currently underway. We will continue to invest in the **resilience of partners** in neighbouring states and beyond, in particular through the Union's wider peace, security, neighbourhood, development and cooperation instruments.

Multilateral and regional partners

The EU's strategic partnership with NATO is essential for our Euro-Atlantic security. The EU remains fully committed to further enhancing this key partnership also to foster the transatlantic bond. Building on the unprecedented progress made on strengthening cooperation with **NATO** since 2016, further ambitious and concrete steps need to be taken to develop shared answers to existing and new threats and common challenges. The Joint Declarations signed in 2016, 2018 [and most recently in 2021/2022] are the key pillars of this cooperation. In the spirit of these Joint Declarations and based on the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity, openness and transparency, as well as the decision-making autonomy of both organisations, we will continue our **close and mutually beneficial cooperation**. We will further enhance ongoing cooperation on crisis management operations, military capability development and military mobility. We will deepen our common work on enhancing maritime security and countering hybrid threats including foreign information manipulation and securing cyberspace. We will furthermore expand our cooperation on emerging and disruptive technologies, climate change and defence, resilience and outer space.

To improve **political dialogue**, we will organise more frequent and inclusive joint EU-NATO high-level meetings that focus on strategically relevant issues. Targeted exchanges through regular joint meetings of the EU Political and Security Committee and the North Atlantic Council will be enhanced. Staff-to-staff interactions with NATO are a core feature of our partnership, but this can be further reinforced by intensifying strategic communications, coordinating and/or adopting joint statements and conducting joint visits by senior EU and NATO representatives. Dialogue and cooperation should be bolstered through increased exchanges with NATO on the assessment of the security environment from **shared situational awareness** to foresight exercises. In that respect, our ability to exchange unclassified and classified information is of critical importance.

The **Parallel and Coordinated Exercises** organised by the EU and NATO enable information exchange and improve our readiness to tackle mutual security concerns, including complex hybrid attacks. However, our approach to exercises will need to evolve to address more effectively the

shifting geopolitical and technological trends currently underway. Dedicated scenario-based discussions and the further inclusion of **military mobility** in future exercises will be of paramount importance. Moving to **joint and inclusive exercises** would be a real driver for enhanced EU-NATO cooperation and a way of building confidence, improving interoperability and deepening our partnership. This requires appropriate information sharing.

In order to uphold rules-based multilateralism, we must strengthen our strategic partnership with the **United Nations** (UN). We will ensure coherence with the UN's actions in the area of peace and security. We will substantially step up our political dialogue with the UN, including by adopting high-level joint statements.

Through our civilian and military missions and operations, we are working together with the UN in many theatres but we can do more to help reinforce, bridge, substitute or complement UN tasks and missions. In this regard, we will strengthen our strategic partnership with the UN on peace operations and crisis management, including with the implementation of the new joint set of priorities on crisis management and peace operations for 2022-2024. This includes in particular more **operational coordination** on the ground and cooperation on contingency planning and mutual support. We will therefore make full use of the EU-UN Framework Agreement on Mutual Support for our respective missions and operations in the field.

If the EU and UN are to meet the challenges of the future, a more dynamic approach to **early warning and conflict prevention** is required. Structured exchange of information, joint horizon scanning, strategic foresight and conflict analyses can help us make best use of our knowledge and expertise. This is important if we are to respond to new and emerging challenges such as climate change, pandemics, terrorism, organised crime, emerging and disruptive technologies and hybrid threats, including cyberattacks and disinformation. We will also continue promoting the Women Peace and Security agenda.

We will further strengthen our strategic cooperation with the **African Union** (AU), based on political dialogue and operational engagement from Somalia to the Sahel region. This can be achieved through joint field visits and closer coordination at the planning and conduct levels. We will seek a more **robust and balanced** security partnership with African partners. To this end, the EU will develop closer operational ties with regional and sub-regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the G5 Sahel, as well as *ad hoc* bodies or coalitions in Africa. As reliable security provider, the EU will enhance its efforts to support African-led initiatives that contribute to peace and security on the African continent. We will develop military-to-military and police-to-police contacts with African counterparts to enhance our situational awareness. Furthermore, we will strengthen trilateral cooperation between the EU, the UN and the AU.

We will strengthen our cooperation with the **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe** (OSCE), notably in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management. While developing closer operational linkages with the OSCE in the Western Balkans, the eastern neighbourhood and Central Asia, we will explore how the EU can work closer with OSCE field missions and strengthen its relationship with the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre. An emphasis will be placed on **information sharing** for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management,

security governance and reform and post-conflict stabilisation. Joint EU-OSCE activities such as training and exchange of best practices and lessons learned can advance our cooperation.

With the Indo-Pacific becoming an increasingly important region, we will work with the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** to enhance shared awareness and information exchange on violent extremism, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats, cybersecurity, maritime security, transnational crime, humanitarian and disaster relief and crisis management. With a view to full membership of ASEAN's Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus setting, we will seize every opportunity to engage in shared awareness activities with ASEAN and contribute to its effort to build pan Asian security arrangements. Working notably through the ASEAN Regional Forum, we will further enhance our security contribution and presence in the **Indo-Pacific** region.

Further cooperation with other regional organisations, including the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), will also continue to be developed.

Tailored bilateral partnerships

We will engage more coherently, consistently and comprehensively with our **bilateral partners** around the world, including by making full use of and strengthening our network of military advisors and counter-terrorism experts in EU Delegations. We will further build partnerships on the basis of shared values and interests, while taking into account the intensity and specific characteristics of our existing relationships. To this end, we will include security and defence issues more systematically in our political dialogues with partners. In addition, every two years we will convene an **EU Security and Defence Partnership Forum** to bring our partners together. The Forum will provide an opportunity to discuss at a high political level topical and thematic issues related to security and defence. It will allow the European Union to bring partners together and showcase their support to the Union's contribution to international peace and security and the challenges that we face. The goal is to reinforce partnerships by creating a common sense of purpose. This will contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of coordinated international efforts, while reinforcing the credibility and legitimacy of EU action.

Our partnership with the **United States** is of strategic importance and we must deepen our cooperation in security and defence in a mutually beneficial way. We are already working with the US across a broad range of security and defence policy areas and in the field. But we need to build on the momentum created by the EU-US Summit Statement of June 2021. The **dedicated strategic dialogue on security and defence** between the EU and the US is an important milestone in the consolidation of the transatlantic partnership. It will foster closer and mutually beneficial cooperation in areas such as respective security and defence initiatives, disarmament and non-proliferation, the impact of emerging and disruptive technologies, climate change and defence, cyber defence, military mobility, countering hybrid threats including foreign information manipulation and interference, crisis management and the relationship with strategic competitors.

We will deepen our constructive relations with **Canada** and **Norway** and we value the dedicated dialogues on security and defence with these and other like-minded partners. We remain open to a broad and ambitious security and defence engagement with the **United Kingdom**.

With **Turkey**, a contributor to CSDP missions and operations, we will continue to cooperate in areas of common interest. We remain committed to developing a mutually beneficial partnership, but this requires equal commitment on Turkey's side to advance on a path of cooperation, sustained de-escalation and to address EU concerns, in accordance with the statement of the members of the European Council of 25 March 2021.

We remain committed to improving the resilience of societies and democratic processes, political institutions and critical infrastructure in the **Western Balkans**, as well as boosting cybersecurity, countering disinformation and supporting counter-terrorism efforts in the region. To help build civilian and military capacity and resilience in the region, working closely together with the UN, NATO and the OSCE is of the utmost importance. We welcome the regular contributions our partners in the Western Balkans have made to our CSDP missions and operations.

In view of the increasingly challenging security environment that affects the stability and governance of our **Eastern partners**, we will boost our cooperation in the area of security and defence. The challenges faced by these countries, including hostile interference by Russia and the extensive use of hybrid tactics, compromise their stability and their democratic processes and have direct implications for our own security. As close partners to the EU, specific dialogues with Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova will be strengthened in areas such as countering hybrid threats, disinformation and cybersecurity. We value their contributions to our CSDP missions and operations. We will also support our Eastern partners in building resilience through assistance measures.

In the **southern neighbourhood**, global and regional challenges have increased and highlighted our mutual interdependence and the need to establish closer partnerships on security and defence. We underline in particular that terrorism, violent extremism, radicalisation, cyber and hybrid threats as well as organised crime and irregular migration, are major threats that affect both shores of the Mediterranean and are often interlinked. In this context, we will offer more comprehensive security packages to southern neighbourhood partners ready to deepen cooperation on a range of issues, including operational cooperation. We also underline the need to increase the EU's investment in peace and stability of the Middle East and the Gulf.

Enhancing the security of our **African partners** remains one of the key priorities for us. As we are witnessing a growing presence of our strategic competitors from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, we will engage with the full range of EU security and defence tools, in particular military and civilian missions and operations, peace and stabilisation programmes, assistance measures and financial support. We will seek to establish security and defence dialogues with African partners on these issues. We will better link military assistance with structural reform, including human resources management, as well as with civilian capacity building and security sector reform. We will help our partners to strengthen their resilience against conventional as well as hybrid threats such as disinformation and cyberattacks, as well as climate change. We will seek the engagement of capable partners in Africa in our CSDP missions and operations to increase our joint efforts against instability and terrorism.

We already have constructive security and defence consultations and security cooperation with **Indo-Pacific** countries such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Vietnam. We are committed to working with like-minded partners through operational cooperation on the ground, particularly where these efforts support regional peace and security structures and initiatives. The EU has conducted a series of **joint naval exercises and port calls**, most recently with Japan, the Republic of Korea, Djibouti and India. Such live exercises will become standard practice and help us ensure a secure and open Indo-Pacific. We will continue to pursue dialogue and consultations with China where this is in our interests, especially on issues such as respect for the law of the sea, peaceful settlement of disputes and a rules-based international order.

We must deepen our partnership with **Latin America**, building on the specific security and defence dialogue with Colombia and Chile. Recognising that partners in Latin America have contributed to CSDP missions and operations, we can collectively do more to help them counter hybrid threats, cyberattacks and organised crime, as well as engaging in dialogue and action on climate and security and maritime security. Our objective is also to further promote the participation of Latin American countries in our EU security and defence efforts.

A more **tailored and integrated approach to capacity building** of partners will be pursued. This could include, particularly in crisis management situations, training, advising, mentoring and equipping the armed forces and security forces of partners. While the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument remains the main financial tool to support security and stability abroad and should be used as much as possible, the **European Peace Facility** will enhance our efforts to help build defence capacity, complementing our CSDP crisis management efforts. We also need to better link military assistance with civilian capacity building, security sector reform, governance, respect of rule of law and human rights, democratic oversight and capacity to deter and respond to hybrid threats such as disinformation and cyberattacks. Coordination with the Commission's programmes and instruments will be crucial for the success of our actions.

We welcome the **contributions to our CSDP missions and operations** from all our partners and encourage them to dedicate more personnel and capabilities to our missions and operations as part of a mutual effort to promote international peace and security. To this end, we will help our partners to strengthen their capacity to contribute to CSDP missions and operations. In 2021, we have already enhanced the modalities for participation of third States in CSDP missions and operations by ensuring a greater level of information sharing at all stages of the planning.

Objectives

We aim to deepen our cooperation with partners and further tailor our partnership packages. We will maintain and deepen our security and defence dialogues, joint situational awareness and joint training and exercises. We will work with partners to counter hybrid threats such as disinformation and cyberattacks. Our approach will also address partners' need for capacity building and support.

Multilateral

- From 2022, [building upon the three Joint Declarations], we will further strengthen, deepen and expand our strategic partnership, political dialogue and cooperation with **NATO** across all agreed areas of interaction, including new key work strands such as resilience, emerging disruptive technologies, climate and defence and outer space.
- Starting in 2022, we will implement the new joint set of priorities for **EU-UN cooperation** (2022-2024), and in particular conduct joint horizon scanning and strategic foresight, joint conflict analysis and further enhance our political and operational coordination and cooperation, as well as our information exchange, including with the provision of satellite imagery through the EU Satellite Centre.
- In 2022, we will hold the first biennial **Security and Defence Partnerships Forum** in Brussels bringing multilateral, regional and bilateral partners together at the invitation of the High Representative.

Regional

- As of 2022, we will deepen political dialogue and strengthen cooperation with the **African Union**, **OSCE** and **ASEAN** in areas such as conflict prevention, shared situational awareness and resilience. In addition, we will:
 - Aim to conduct joint field visits with the **African Union** and seek closer coordination at the operational planning and conduct levels; we will also intensify trilateral EU-AU-UN cooperation;
 - Seek to develop a joint dedicated roadmap with the **OSCE** on conflict prevention with concrete regional and thematic actions.

Bilateral

- As of 2022, we will move forward with a dedicated security and defence dialogue with the **United States**, on the basis of the Summit Statement of June 2021.
- We will deepen our cooperation with **Canada and Norway** on the basis of the existing dialogues. We remain open to engage with the **United Kingdom** on security and defence

6. CONCLUSION

This Strategic Compass details how the European Union and its Member States plan to **strengthen our security and defence**. Over the next decade, we commit ourselves to take the necessary and concrete steps to become a more assertive and decisive security provider, better prepared to tackle present and future threats and challenges. Our ability to deploy, exercise and plan together is central to our ambition. Moreover, we must be more resilient against hybrid threats, cyberattacks and climate-related risks, natural disasters and pandemics. We must secure our access to strategic domains. Targeted investments in innovative defence capabilities and mechanisms will increase our ability to act and lower unwanted strategic dependencies. And our strengthened partnerships will enhance our security. In carrying this forward, we must ensure synergies with work under the Security Union, as well as other relevant Commission's policies and initiatives.

The actions detailed in this Strategic Compass are ambitious, but achievable with sustained political commitment. This Compass provides the **strategic perspective** and details the tools and initiatives required to ensure more rapid, decisive and robust EU action. Despite important progress in recent years, the EU is collectively underequipped to counter the whole range of threats and challenges it faces. We must change this and narrow the gap between our aspirations and actions.

The High Representative, in consultation with the Commission and the European Defence Agency, will provide an annual report on the progress made as a basis for the European Council to provide political guidance for our efforts. Based on a revised threat analysis planned in 2026 and on the achievement of key objectives foreseen, the High Representative will present proposals on a possible **revision of this Strategic Compass**. Together, we will implement our common security and defence objectives to build a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security.
