

PRESS RELEASE

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Security and defence: Council reviews progress and agrees to improve support for military missions



On 6 March the Council adopted conclusions setting out the progress achieved in **implementing the EU global strategy in the area of security and defence**. The conclusions assess what has been done to implement the various lines of action agreed by the European Council on 15 December 2016. They form the basis of a report for the European Council of 9 and 10 March 2017.

"EU foreign and defence ministers meeting jointly today all gave a very clear message: we are progressing steadily towards strengthened defence cooperation and we will continue to do more. This is about protecting our citizens. The European Union has unique tools to help Europeans to take more responsibility for their own security, and to do more effectively. This is what we are doing with our work in security and defence."

Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

The Council also approved a concept note on the operational planning and conduct capabilities for CSDP missions and operations, which contains measures to improve the **EU's capacity to react in a faster, more effective and more seamless manner**, building on existing structures and in view of enhancing civilian-military synergies, as part of the EU's comprehensive approach.

These measures include the establishment of a **military planning and conduct capability** (MPCC), within the existing EU Military Staff of the European External Action Service, for **the planning and conduct of non-executive military missions**. The Director General of the EU Military Staff will be the Director of the MPCC and in that capacity will assume **command of non-executive military CSDP missions** (currently, the EU military training missions in Somalia, in Central Africa and in Mali). This will allow the mission commanders in the field to concentrate on the specific activities of their mission, with **better support provided from Brussels**.

The MPCC will work under the **political control and strategic guidance** of the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which is composed of EU member states' ambassadors and is based in Brussels. The MPCC will work closely with its **existing civilian counterpart**, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) through a joint support coordination cell. This cell will be able to share expertise, knowledge and best practices on issues relevant to both military and civilian missions, as well as capabilities when civilian and military missions are simultaneously deployed in the same area, including medical support or protective measures.

The Council conclusions highlight the establishment of the MPCC. They also take note of progress in other areas of security and defence, and provide further guidance. The areas covered include:

- the possibility of **permanent structured cooperation** (PESCO). It is foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty that for a group of EU member states may strengthen their cooperation in military matters (Articles 42(6) and 46 TEU). Setting up an inclusive, modular system of permanent structured cooperation would allow member states to collaborate further in the area of security and defence on a voluntary basis.
- the possibility of a member state-driven **coordinated annual review on defence** (CARD), which would establish a process to obtain a better overview at EU level of issues such as defence spending and national investment as well as defence research efforts. By bringing greater transparency and political visibility to European defence capabilities, a CARD

would provide for a better identification of shortfalls and allow for them to be addressed through deeper defence cooperation as well as better and more coherent approach to defence expenditure planning.

- ongoing work in other areas, such as on strengthening the EU's rapid response toolbox, including the **EU battlegroups** and **civilian capabilities**, capacity building in support of security and development, situational awareness and defence capability development.

The Council also notes the progress made in the implementation of the common set of proposals for **EU-NATO cooperation** and of the Commission's **European defence action plan**.

Background

On 14 November 2016, the Council adopted conclusions on implementing the EU global strategy in the area of security and defence. These conclusions set out the level of ambition, meaning the main goals the EU and its member states aim to achieve in the area of security and defence. The Council set out three strategic priorities: responding to external conflicts and crises, building the capacities of partners, and protecting the European Union and its citizens.

The implementation plan on security and defence was presented by the High Representative, acting also in her roles as Vice-President of the European Commission and Head of the European Defence Agency, to member states. It is part of the follow-up to the EU global strategy on foreign and security policy, which was presented by the High Representative to the European Council on 28 June. The Council adopted conclusions on the global strategy on 17 October 2016.

The implementation of the EU global strategy also includes further work on building resilience and an integrated approach to conflicts and crises, strengthening the nexus between internal and external policies, updating existing or preparing new regional and thematic strategies and stepping up public diplomacy efforts.

- [Council conclusions of 6 March 2017 on progress in implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence](#)
- [Concept Note: Operational Planning and Conduct Capabilities for CSDP Missions and Operations](#)
- [EU cooperation on security and defence \(background information\)](#)
- [The European Union Military Staff \(EEAS webpage\)](#)

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