

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL (Defence)

18 May 2017

The Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will start at 10.00. The defence ministers will first take stock of the implementation of the **EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence** and are expected to adopt conclusions.

Ministers will discuss the progress achieved in implementing decisions on security and defence agreed to in the Foreign Affairs Council in March. These include the future establishment of a Brussels-based military planning and conduct capability (MPCC) to support the non-executive military CSDP missions, the possibility of permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and of a member state-driven coordinated annual review on defence (CARD), strengthening the EU's rapid response tools, including the EU battle groups, and taking a more strategic approach to partnerships in CSDP. The ministers are also expected to touch upon the implementation of the European Defence Action Plan, following a presentation by Commissioner Bieńkowska.

The Council will also discuss **EU-NATO cooperation**. The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg will attend this discussion.

Over the lunch, defence ministers will discuss **counter-terrorism** together with interior ministers. It will be co-chaired by the High Representative and Carmelo Abela, Minister for Home Affairs and National Security.

The Council meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the **European Defence Agency (EDA) steering board** at 8.30.

Press opportunities:

- +/- 8.15 (tbc) Doorstep statement by High Representative Federica Mogherini
- +/- 15.30 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council (Defence)

[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)

[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

Implementation of the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence

Ministers will have a discussion on the implementation of the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence. Following the discussion of foreign ministers on 15 May, defence ministers will take stock of the progress made and are expected to adopt Council Conclusions on security and defence in the context of the EU Global Strategy.

The Council conclusions are expected to take note of the progress achieved to strengthen cooperation in the area of security and defence, including:

- The ongoing work in view of establishment of the **military planning and conduct capability (MPCC)**, within the EU military staff (part of the EEAS) and assuming command of non-executive military CSDP missions (at present: EUTM Somalia, EUTM RCA, EUTM Mali), as agreed on 6 March 2017.
- The way forward on permanent structured cooperation (**PESCO**). The Lisbon Treaty introduced the possibility for EU member states to strengthen their cooperation in military matters by establishing permanent structured cooperation (Articles 42(6) and 46 TEU). The idea is to make full use of this possibility by setting up an inclusive permanent structured cooperation, through which those member states who are willing and are able to join could collaborate further in the area of security and defence.
- 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, for instance, defence spending and national investments and defence research efforts, with a view to better address European capability shortfalls, deepen defence cooperation and ensure optimal use and coherence of defence spending plans.
- Strengthening the EU's rapid response toolbox, including the **EU battlegroups**, with a view to develop further their modularity in a pragmatic way and adapt as necessary financing arrangements.
- Adopting a more strategic approach to Common and Security Defence Policy **partnerships**, in view of enhancing cooperation with partner countries that share EU values and are able and willing to contribute to CSDP missions and operations.

Ministers will also exchange views on the **European defence action plan (EDAP)** and the possible European defence fund following a presentation by the European Commissioner for internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta Bieńkowska.

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 will 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. Progress was noted and further guidance provided through Council conclusions on 6 March 2017.

Security and defence is one of the priority areas for work on the implementation of the EU Global Strategy, which also includes 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.

[EU cooperation on security and defence](#)

[Council conclusions of 6 March 2017 on progress in implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence \(press release\)](#)

[EU Global Strategy on foreign and security policy \(website\)](#)

EU-NATO cooperation

The Council will discuss **EU-NATO cooperation**, in particular the ongoing work through the common set of proposals for the implementation of the Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg will attend this discussion. This discussion is timely in view of the upcoming meeting of NATO leaders in Brussels on 25 May 2017 and the joint progress report on the implementation of the common set of proposals due for June 2017.

EU-NATO cooperation is one of the key priorities of the ongoing work to strengthen common security and defence. At a time of unprecedented security challenges at regional and global level, strengthening cooperation between the two organisations is essential.

In its conclusions on 6 December 2016, the Council highlighted that the Joint Declaration gives **new impetus and substance to EU-NATO cooperation** in several areas, and that the implementation of the Joint Declaration is a **key political priority for the EU**. It endorsed 42 proposals, a common set which was also endorsed by the North Atlantic Council.

As identified in the Joint Declaration, the strengthened EU-NATO cooperation aims at:

- boosting common ability to counter **hybrid threats**;
- broadening and adapting **operational cooperation** including at sea, and on migration
- expanding coordination on **cyber security and defence**;
- developing coherent, complementary and interoperable **defence capabilities** of EU Member States and NATO Allies, as well as multilateral projects;
- facilitating a stronger **defence industry** and greater **defence research** and industrial cooperation within Europe and across the Atlantic;
- stepping up **coordination on exercises** and
- building the defence and security capacity and foster the resilience of **partners**.

The 42 proposals cover these seven areas and are currently being implemented by both organisations.

[EU cooperation on security and defence](#)

[EU-NATO cooperation - Factsheet](#)

[EU-NATO cooperation: Council adopt conclusions to implement Joint Declaration](#)

["Taking EU-NATO cooperation to a new level" - Joint op-ed by President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg](#)

Counter-terrorism

Over the lunch, defence ministers will discuss counter-terrorism together with home affairs ministers. They are expected to focus on improving cooperation and information exchange between military and law enforcement structures.

[EU fight against terrorism \(background information\)](#)

European Defence Agency Steering Board

Ministers of defence will meet in the European Defence Agency (EDA) Steering Board under the chairmanship of Federica Mogherini in her capacity as Head of the Agency. All EU member states except Denmark participate.

Ministers are expected to discuss and endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Agency's long term review. The long term review was launched last year by the High Representative. It is an in-depth reflection, assessing the EDA's longer-term objectives, priorities and way of working. The aim is to adapt the Agency in the light of upcoming more ambitious tasks.

Ministers will also discuss the ongoing work in view of introducing a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). The Steering Board is expected to confirm and encourage EDA's further work, together with the EEAS, on the definition of CARD.

The Steering Board will also take stock of the Agency's main cooperative programmes – such as for example air-to-air refuelling, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), GovSatCom and cyber defence. Ministers will also discuss the progress made towards a structured dialogue and enhanced engagement with industry.

Ministers may also touch upon the establishment of a Cooperative Financial Mechanism (CFM). This mechanism is meant to incentivise the launch of new collaborative programmes and projects by ensuring better synchronisation of budget availability in member states.

[European Defence Agency \(website\)](#)
