



EU-NATO Cooperation

The political context

In the current strategic environment, cooperation between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is essential. The two organisations are faced with unprecedented challenges emanating from the South and the East. The security of EU and NATO are inter-connected: not only are 22 EU Member States also NATO Allies; together, they can also mobilise a broad range of tools and make the most efficient use of resources to address those challenges and enhance the security of their citizens.

EU-NATO cooperation constitutes an integral pillar of the EU's work aimed at strengthening European security and defence, as part of the [implementation of the EU Global Strategy](#). It also contributes to the strengthening of the Trans-Atlantic bond and to burden sharing. A stronger EU and a stronger NATO are mutually reinforcing.

EU-NATO cooperation

On 8 July 2016 the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, together with the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization signed a Joint

Declaration in Warsaw with a view to giving new impetus and new substance to the EU-NATO strategic partnership. It outlined seven concrete areas where cooperation between the two organisations should be enhanced: 1. countering hybrid threats; 2. operational cooperation including at sea and on migration; 3. cyber security and defence; 4. defence capabilities; 5. defence industry and research; 6. exercises; 7. supporting Eastern and Southern partners' capacity-building efforts.

On the basis of the mandate by the Joint Declaration, the European Union and NATO established a common set of proposals which was endorsed by the EU and NATO Councils on 6 December 2016. The set includes 42 concrete actions for the implementation of the Joint Declaration in all seven areas of cooperation with a clear focus on deliverables. A follow-up mechanism ensures that progress is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

A new era of interaction

As a direct follow-up to the Joint Declaration, the two organisations are opening their activities to each other to gain better knowledge and understanding of each other. Cooperation is now indeed the established norm and daily practice, fully corresponding to the new level of ambition referred to in the Joint Declaration, providing a solid basis for further enhanced interaction.



Photo: Donald Tusk, Jens Stoltenberg and Jean-Claude Juncker (from left to right)

Progress

The High Representative/Vice President/Head of Agency and the Secretary General of NATO submitted to the respective Councils in June the first progress report on the implementation of the 42 actions. It highlighted the enhanced EU-NATO relationship and outlined some key specific actions in implementing the common set of proposals, including the following.



Hybrid threats

EU-NATO cooperation on countering hybrid threats is more important than ever. Ten out of the forty-two proposals are linked to the fight against hybrid threats. EU and NATO, along with Member States and Allies, will contribute to and participate in the activities of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats set up in Helsinki. Better situational awareness is critical for our work to counter hybrid threats effectively. The establishment of the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell and its interaction with the NATO Hybrid Analysis Cell will help us draw up a shared situational picture.



Strategic Communication

Collaboration between strategic communications teams will help convey the message that we stand united, notably in support of our partners and in delivering coordinated messages.



Maritime coordination

Cooperation and coordination between Operations EUNAVFOR Med Sophia and Sea Guardian have been enhanced through regular information sharing and logistical support. This builds on existing cooperation in the Aegean Sea and experience acquired in the Indian Ocean.



Cyber security

Recent coordinated cyber-attacks across the globe demonstrate the need to tackle vulnerabilities of our societies and institutions. The exchange of concepts on the integration of cyber defence aspects into the planning and conduct of missions and operations has opened the door to increased cooperation in this domain.



Exercises

The first for parallel and coordinated exercise took place in October 2017. EU and NATO staffs exercised together their response to a hybrid scenario. It led to strong interaction between respective staff in a crisis-simulation situation and enhanced understanding of respective crisis response procedures.



Supporting partners' capacity building

Assisting partners in building their capacities and fostering resilience, in particular in the Western Balkans, and in our Eastern and Southern neighbourhood is a common objective. Cooperation on the ground and at Headquarters level in this respect has strengthened substantially. Key areas of interaction have been identified such as strategic communications, cyber, ammunition storage and safety in three pilot countries, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova and Tunisia as first step.



Defence Capabilities

EU Member States and NATO Allies have one single set of forces. On defence capabilities, staffs are increasing efforts to ensure coherence of output between the NATO Defence Planning Process and the EU Capability Development Plan.

Next steps

The June 2017 progress report focused on the implementation of the 42 actions, which will continue to proceed. The next report due in December will offer an opportunity to consider possible additional suggestions for future cooperation as well.

EU-NATO cooperation continues to take place on the basis of key guiding principles: openness, transparency, inclusiveness and reciprocity, in full respect of the decision-making autonomy and procedures of both organisations without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of any Member State.