# 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

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# A STRATEGIC COMPASS TO MAKE EUROPE A SECURITY PROVIDER

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**Foreword by HR/VP Josep Borrell**

## Europe's geopolitical awakening

The war against Ukraine proves that Europe is even more in danger than we thought just a few months ago, when the first draft of this Strategic Compass was presented. At stake are the very principles upon which international relations are built, not least those of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. History is accelerating once again. This crisis has made it even clearer that we live in a world shaped by raw power politics, where everything is weaponised and where we face a fierce battle of narratives. All these trends were already happening before the Ukraine war; now they are accelerating.

This means that our response must accelerate too – and it has. We have taken rapid actions across the spectrum and broken several taboos along the way: unprecedented sanctions, massive support to Ukraine including, for the first time ever, financing the delivery of military equipment to a country under attack and building a wide international coalition to support Ukraine and restore international legality.

We now need to ensure that we turn the EU's geopolitical awakening into a more permanent strategic posture. For there is so much more to do. The essence of what the EU did in reacting to Russia's invasion was to unite and use the full range of EU policies and levers as instruments of power. We showed that we are ready to pay a severe price to defend our security and that of our partners – the price of freedom. We should build on this approach in the period ahead, in Ukraine but elsewhere too.

Across the EU, there is a clear commitment to learn the right lessons from this crisis and the broader weaponisation of interdependence that we face. This involves us finally getting serious about threats to our strategic interests that we have been aware of but not always acted upon. Take energy. We have known for years that energy plays a disproportionate role in EU-Russia relations and that Russia has used energy as a political weapon. We are now fully mobilised to cut our excessive dependence on Russia energy imports.

The war against Ukraine is making it more urgent to achieve a sea change in EU security and defence. This too we have known for years but not always acted upon. Today, no one denies that we need robust capabilities and the willingness to use them against the full spectrum of threats we face. How to get this done in practice is the purpose of the Strategic Compass.

In other words, the Strategic Compass is not the sole answer to the war on Ukraine as that answer goes well beyond the area of security and defence. Similarly, the Strategic Compass is about much more than the war on Ukraine, as we have to confront the full range of threats we face. Indeed, the purpose of the Strategic Compass is to guide the necessary development of the EU security and defence agenda for the next ten years.

The good news is that every day we are seeing more member states ready to invest more in security and defence. We must ensure that these welcome additional investments are done in a collaborative way and not in a fragmented, national manner. We must use the new momentum to ensure that we, finally, equip ourselves with the mind-set, the means and the mechanisms to defend our Union, our citizens and our partners.

In so doing, the EU will also help to strengthen NATO and become a stronger Transatlantic partner: a partner that is more capable of sharing the burden of maintaining international peace and security. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has shown both how essential NATO is for the collective defence of its members and the important role that the EU plays in today's complex security and defence environment.

## A new world of threats

The war on Ukraine is the most serious security crisis in Europe in decades, but threats to European security clearly come from a variety of sources, both within Europe and beyond. Our security interests are at stake also in the Western Balkans, in the Sahel, in the wider Middle East and in the Indo-Pacific.

We should not forget that the world is full of situations where we face hybrid tactics and intermediate dynamics of competition, intimidation and coercion. Indeed, in Ukraine as elsewhere, the tools of power are not only soldiers, tanks and planes but also financial sanctions or import and export bans, as well as energy flows, and disinformation and foreign interference operations.

In addition, we have seen in recent years the instrumentalisation of migrants, the privatisation of armies and the politicisation of the control of sensitive technologies. Add to this the dynamics of state failures, the retreat of democratic freedoms, plus the attacks on the 'global commons'

of cyber space, the high seas and outer-space, and the conclusion is clear: the defence of Europe requires a comprehensive concept of security.

There is more awareness and agreement in Europe today on the nature of the threats we face – just as there is a process of strategic convergence on what to do about them. Europeans will continue to favour dialogue over confrontation; diplomacy over force; multilateralism over unilateralism. But it is clear that if you want dialogue, diplomacy and multilateralism to succeed, you need to put power behind it. That is the point of 'learning to speak the language of power', as I have been arguing for more than two years.

## The case for ambition and results

The work on this Strategic Compass started well before the invasion of Ukraine. Indeed, for a variety of reasons the debate on European defence had already accelerated throughout 2021. This had led to a common acknowledgement that we needed a step change. Therefore, EU Leaders tasked me to come up with a way to translate that common ambition into actionable proposals.

Throughout the whole exercise, I have been convinced that we must be ambitious, because the fast-worsening strategic environment is forcing us to act. But equally that we should be result-oriented and avoid our usual European tendency to go for conceptual or institutional discussions. It is often easier to talk - and disagree - in abstract terms, than it is to act and agree on how to do things in concrete terms. This attitude we cannot afford.

In all this, it is important to realise that on security and defence, we do not start from zero. Indeed, in recent years the EU has equipped itself with a number of instruments to introduce more coherence into the field of security and defence. The Strategic Compass builds on this process. It is neither a crystal ball for predicting the future, nor a silver bullet that will magically enable Europe to develop a common defence policy overnight. It is, however, a guide for preparation, decision and action.

The Strategic Compass is setting out concrete actions in the following four work strands so that we:

- **Act** more quickly and decisively when facing crises;
- **Secure** our citizens against fast-changing threats;
- **Invest** in the capabilities and technologies we need; and
- **Partner** with others to achieve common goals.

To strengthen our capacity to act, we will work to reinforce our crisis management missions and operation and will develop an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity to allow us to quickly deploy up to 5,000 troops for different types of crises. We will increase the readiness of our forces through regular live exercises (never been done before at the EU level), strengthen our command and control arrangements and promote faster and more flexible decision-making. We will expand

our capacity to tackle cyber threats, disinformation and foreign interference. And we will deepen investment into the necessary strategic enablers and next-generation capabilities. This will make the EU a more capable security provider for its citizens, but also a stronger global partner working for international peace and security.

More than the papers that we usually produce in Brussels, the Strategic Compass sets out concrete actions – with clear deadlines to measure progress. This a Member States-owned document now adopted by the Council. Throughout the process, Member States have been in the driving seat. By signing off to it, they commit to implementing it. There will be a robust follow-up process to ensure implementation. These are major differences with the 2003 EU Security Strategy and the 2016 Global Strategy.

## If not now, then when?

The history of European integration is full of plans and initiatives to strengthen the EU's security and defence policy. Most have come and gone. Therefore, sometimes people ask me why this time should be any different.

For me, the difference this time lies in the speed at which the geopolitical context is changing. This makes the case for action more urgent and indeed compelling. This is vividly true for the war in Ukraine and the wider implications that a revisionist Russia has for European security.

However, it goes beyond that: all the threats we face around the world are intensifying and the capacity of individual Member States to cope is insufficient and declining. That is why we Europeans must invest in our capacity to think, decide and act in strategic terms – together with our partners and on our own when needed.

I am encouraged by the new sense of seriousness and strategic purpose that has taken hold in Europe. The threats are rising and the costs of inaction - of 'non-Europe' - are clear. I am convinced that we need a quantum leap forward on security and defence, similar to other big jumps we have made in European history.

It is my fervent hope that this Strategic Compass will help us, finally, face our security responsibilities, in front of our citizens and the rest of the world. If not now, then when?

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The return of war in Europe, with Russia's unjustified and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, as well as major geopolitical shifts are challenging our ability to promote our vision and defend our interests**. We live in an era of strategic competition and complex security threats. We see conflicts, military build-ups and aggressions, and sources of instability increasing in our neighbourhood and beyond, leading to severe humanitarian suffering and displacement. Hybrid threats grow both in frequency and impact. Interdependence is increasingly conflictual and soft power weaponised: vaccines, data and technology standards are all instruments of political competition. Access to the high seas, outer space and the digital sphere is increasingly contested. We are facing increasing attempts of economic and energy coercion. Moreover, conflicts and instability are often compounded by the threat-multiplier effect of climate change.

**The European Union is more united than ever. We are committed to defend the European security order.** Sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence within internationally recognised borders should be fully respected. Supporting Ukraine in facing Russia's military aggression, we are showing **an unprecedented resolve to restore peace in Europe, together with our partners**. A stronger and more capable EU in the field of security and defence will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO, which remains the foundation of collective defence for its members. The transatlantic relationship and EU-NATO cooperation, in full respect of the principles set out in the Treaties and those agreed by the European Council, including the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of the EU, are key to our overall security. The EU reaffirms its intention to intensify support for the global rules-based order, with the United Nations at its core. It will also reinforce its strategic partnership with NATO and increase its cooperation with regional partners, including the OSCE, AU and ASEAN.

**The more hostile security environment requires us to make a quantum leap forward and increase our capacity and willingness to act, strengthen our resilience and ensure solidarity and mutual assistance**. The solidarity between Member States is reflected in article 42(7) TEU. The EU has to increase its presence, effectiveness and visibility in its neighbourhood and on the global stage through joint efforts and investments. Together, we can help shape the global future by pursuing a strategic course of action. We must act as a strong and coherent political actor to uphold the values and principles underpinning our democracies, take more responsibility for the security of Europe and its citizens and support international peace and security, as well as human security, together with partners, while acknowledging the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.

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 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 process** and ensuring greater **financial solidarity**, while also promoting close cooperation with European-led *ad hoc* missions and operations. 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** that will allow us to swiftly deploy up to 5,000 troops into non-permissive environments 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 enhancing **military mobility** and **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, air 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. **Spend more and better in defence and 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, space-based capabilities 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 strategic 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 OSCE, AU and ASEAN;

11. Boost cooperation with **bilateral partners** that share the same values and interests such as United States, Norway, Canada, UK and Japan. 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.

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 environment and wider geopolitical trends call for the EU to shoulder a greater share of responsibility for its own security.

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# INTRODUCTION

We are adopting this Strategic Compass at a time when we witness **the return of war in Europe**. Over the last seven decades, the EU has been playing a major role for stability on our continent, projecting European interests and values and contributing to peace and security around the world. With 27 Member States and 450 million citizens, our Union remains the world's biggest single market, the most important trade and investment partner for many countries, in particular in our neighbourhood, and the largest source of development assistance. The EU is a norm setter and has been a consistent leader investing in effective multilateral solutions. With our crisis management missions and operations operating on three continents, we have shown that we are ready to take risks for peace and shoulder our share of global security responsibilities.

Russia's war of aggression constitutes a tectonic shift in European history. The EU is more united than ever in face of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine that grossly violates international law and the principles of the UN Charter and undermines European and global security and stability. We are showing **an unprecedented resolve to uphold the principles of the UN Charter and restore peace in Europe together with our partners**. A stronger and more capable EU in the field of security and defence will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO, which remains the foundation of collective defence for its members. The transatlantic relationship and EU-NATO cooperation, in full respect of the principles set out in the Treaties and those agreed by the European Council, including the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of the EU, are key to our overall security. The solidarity between Member States is reflected in Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union. More broadly, the EU reaffirms its intention to intensify support for the global rules-based order, with the United Nations at its core.

In this era of **growing strategic competition, complex security threats and the direct attack on the European security order**, the security of our citizens and our Union is at stake. The crisis in multilateralism is leading to more and more transactional relations among states. The spectrum of threats has grown more diverse and unpredictable. Climate change is a threat-multiplier that affects all of us. After three decades of strong economic interdependence which was supposed to decrease tensions, the return to power politics and even armed aggression, 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.

European security is indivisible and any challenge to the European security order affects the security of the EU and its Member States. **The return to power politics** leads some countries to act 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, air, outer space and the cyber sphere are increasingly contested domains**. Finally, our world is becoming less free with human rights, human security and democratic values under attack – both at home and abroad. **We face a competition of governance systems accompanied by a real battle of narratives**.

In this highly confrontational system, the EU and its Member States **must invest more in their security and defence to be a stronger political and security actor**. Despite the progress we have achieved over the past years, there is a major risk of being outpaced by our competitors: a lot remains to be done for the EU to raise its geopolitical posture. **This is why we need a quantum leap forward to develop a stronger and more capable 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 set out a **common strategic vision** for EU security and defence policy over the next 5-10 years and will immediately start its implementation. 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 guides and enhances our action to make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider. To that end, it identifies 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:
   - enable us to act more quickly and decisively when facing crises;
   - secure our interests and protect our citizens by strengthening the EU's capacity to anticipate and mitigate threats;
   - stimulate investments and innovation to jointly develop the necessary capabilities and technologies;
   - 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. This Strategic Compass also builds upon the Defence and Space packages that the European Commission presented in February 2022. It contributes directly to the implementation of the Versailles agenda.

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# 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, or sooner if the changing strategic and security context calls for it, starting in 2022.

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.

## The return of power politics in a contested multipolar world

The EU is 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. 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 sovereignist approach that constitutes in reality a return to power politics. The present international reality is based on the combination of dynamics with an increasing number of actors seeking to expand their political space and challenge the security order. The use of force and coercion to change borders has no place in the 21st century.

Through the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, **Russia** is grossly violating international law and the principles of the UN Charter and undermining European and global security and stability. This follows the military aggression in Georgia in 2008, as well as the illegal annexation of Crimea and the military intervention in Eastern Ukraine in 2014. Through this armed interference in Georgia and Ukraine, the *de facto* control over Belarus, as well as the continued presence of Russian troops in protracted conflicts, including in the Republic of Moldova, the Russian government is actively aiming to establish so-called spheres of influence. The armed aggression against Ukraine is showing the readiness to use the highest level of military force, regardless of legal or humanitarian considerations, combined with hybrid tactics, cyberattacks and foreign information manipulation and interference, economic and energy coercion and an aggressive nuclear rhetoric. These aggressive and revisionist actions for which the Russian government, together with its accomplice Belarus, is entirely responsible, severely and directly threaten the European security order and the security of European citizens. Those responsible for these crimes, including targeting civilians and civilian objects, will be held accountable. In other theatres such as Libya, Syria, Central African Republic and Mali, Russia also projects itself and uses crises in an opportunistic way, including by using disinformation and mercenaries, such as

the Wagner group. All these developments constitute a long-term and direct threat for European security, which we will continue to face resolutely.

**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. The asymmetry in the openness of our markets and societies have led to growing concerns as regards to reciprocity, economic competition and resilience. China 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 and displaying hybrid tactics. In addition, China has been substantially developing its military means and aims to have completed the overall modernisation of its armed forces by 2035, 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 not contradict the rules-based international order and our interests and values. This requires strong unity amongst us and working closely with other regional and global partners.

In this contested multipolar world, the EU needs to take a more active stance to protect its citizens, defend its interests, project its values, and work with partners to provide security for a safer and more just world. Together with our partners, the EU defends the core principles on which European security is built, enshrined in the **UN Charter** and the **founding documents of the OSCE**, including the **Helsinki Final Act** and the **Charter of Paris**. These include notably the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States; the inviolability of frontiers; refraining from the threat or use of force; and the freedom of States to choose or change their own security arrangements. These principles are neither negotiable nor subject to revision or re-interpretation.

To uphold the international rules-based order, we will continue to strengthen our relations with partners and like-minded countries in the UN, NATO and G7. In this context, the United States remain the EU's staunchest and most important strategic partner and are a global power contributing to peace, security, stability and democracy on our continent.

## Our strategic environment

Today, the EU is surrounded by **instability** and conflicts and faces a war on its borders. We are confronted with 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 and cyberattacks, 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, also due to increasing foreign interferences, including information manipulation campaigns, as well as through potential

spill over from the current deterioration of the European security situation. In this regard, it is of particular interest to support the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination of all citizens and constituent peoples as enshrined in the Bosnia and Herzegovina constitution, as well as the reform process on its European path and to 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**, while Ukraine is being directly attacked by the Russian armed forces, also the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and other countries in the South Caucasus are continuously facing strategic intimidations, direct threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity and are trapped in protracted conflicts. Authoritarianism in Belarus is translated into violent repression at home, active military support to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the change of its nuclear-free status and hybrid tactics against the EU. Stability and security in the wider Black Sea region are severely impacted by the aggression of Russia against Ukraine with far-reaching implications in terms of security, resilience, freedom of navigation and economic development. The **Arctic region** is changing rapidly, in particular due to the impact of global warming, geopolitical rivalries and increased commercial interest including on natural resources. 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. As a region and maritime area of strategic importance for our security and stability, we are committed to enhance our efforts to address these threats and challenges. We will continue to strive for peace and security in the Euro-Mediterranean region, including through mediation, conflict resolution, rebuilding institutions and reintegrating all members of society. To this end, we will enhance our cooperation with regional partners. Finally, tensions in the **Eastern Mediterranean** remain, due to provocations and unilateral actions against EU Member States and violations of sovereign rights in breach of international law, as well as the instrumentalisation of irregular migration, and have the potential to escalate quickly; ensuring a stable and secure environment as well as a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship, in line with the principle of good-neighbourly relations, is in the interest of both the EU and Turkey.

Combined, these threats and challenges affect the security of our citizens, our critical infrastructure and the integrity of our borders. The impact of a strongly deteriorated relationship with the Russian government is particularly severe in many of these theatres. It 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 enhanced EU engagement. Stability in the **Gulf of Guinea**, the **Horn of Africa** and in the **Mozambique Channel** remains a major security imperative for the EU, also as they are key trade routes. 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, destabilising countries and their economies as well as being complicit in human rights violations.

In the wider **Middle East** and **Gulf Region**, active conflicts and persistent instability put our security and economic interests at risk. Addressing nuclear non-proliferation challenges in the region remains of capital importance. Iran is central to security in the region, though its direct and indirect support to political and military proxies as well as the ballistic proliferation and transfer of missiles and weapons to state and non-state actors remain an important source of regional instability. Efforts to achieve a return to full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) are 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 in stability and security in the region. We will therefore protect our interests in the region, also by ensuring 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 increasing challenges regarding irregular migration. Certain actors, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), continue to endanger regional and international peace and security, through weapons of mass destruction and their 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.

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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** and their means of delivery are a persistent threat, as witnessed notably by the DPRK's and Iranian nuclear programmes, the repeated use of chemical weapons and the development and fielding of new advanced ballistic, cruise and hypersonic missiles. Both Russia and China are **expanding their nuclear arsenal** and developing new weapon systems. The Russian leadership has used nuclear threats in the context of its invasion in Ukraine. 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 exacerbated by the erosion of the **arms control architecture** in Europe, from the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty. This normative void is directly impacting the stability and security of the EU. The marked increase in the use of chemical weapons must not be tolerated. Safeguarding the global prohibition of chemical weapons is a shared global responsibility. We will therefore continue to support in particular the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

**State and non-state actors** are using **hybrid strategies**, **cyberattacks**, **disinformation campaigns**, 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. We are increasingly facing more sophisticated cyberattacks. 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 security and defence implications. It is key for observation, monitoring, navigation and communication capabilities, but it is a congested and contested domain, as illustrated by irresponsible behaviours of strategic competitors. **Maritime security** in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the North Sea, as well as of the Arctic waters, the Atlantic Ocean and the outermost regions is important for the EU's security, our economic development, free trade, transport and energy security. Maritime zones, critical sea lanes of communication and several maritime chokepoints as well as seabeds, are increasingly contested, from the Gulf of Aden to the Strait of Hormuz and beyond the Strait of Malacca. Finally, our **security in the air** is also contested through increasingly aggressive air postures with the rise of anti-access/area denial tactics.

**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 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 has fuelled international rivalry and showed that disruptions of key trade routes can put critical supply chains under pressure and affect economic security.

## Strategic implications for the Union

All these challenges are multifaceted and often interconnected. Our security is at stake, at home or overseas. We must be able and ready to **protect our citizens, defend our shared interests, project our values and contribute to shape the global future**. We need to redouble our efforts to implement our **integrated approach** to security, conflicts and crises. We have to be bolder in how we combine our diplomatic and economic instruments, including our sanctions regimes, with civil and military assets to prevent conflict, respond to crises, contribute to peacebuilding and support partners. We will also strengthen our cooperation with bilateral, regional and multilateral European security and defence initiatives that contribute to Europe's security.

Solidarity, unity and our ambition deriving from the **EU Global Strategy** of 2016 are more vital than ever. We will strengthen our ability to contribute to the peace and security of our continent, 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** and show **mutual assistance** and **solidarity** in case of aggression against one of us. The moment for decisive steps to ensure our freedom of action is now.

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, solidarity and determination. 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 will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO, which remains the foundation of collective defence for its members. These two go hand in hand.

In the following chapters, this Strategic Compass sets out how we will **act** and be prepared to respond to various crises and challenges. It 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.

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# 2. ACT

In view of the world we face, we need to step up our efforts to prepare for 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 capable and effective in its ability to **decide and act**. This requires political will. With unanimity as 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 at all stages of the conflict cycle. To this end, we will develop an **EU Rapid Deployment Capacity** that will allow us to swiftly deploy a modular force of up to 5,000 troops, including land, air and maritime components, as well as the required strategic enablers. Such a modular capacity can be used in different phases of an operation in a non-permissive environment, such as initial entry, reinforcement or as reserve force to secure an exit. The development of this capacity will be based on operational scenarios that will initially focus on rescue and evacuation operations, as well as the initial phase of stabilisation operations. The capacity will consist of substantially modified EU Battlegroups and of pre-identified Member States' military forces and capabilities, in line with the single set of forces principle. In this regard, we commit to increase the readiness and availability of our armed forces. A substantial modification of the EU Battlegroups should lead to a more robust and flexible instrument, for instance through tailored force packages including land, maritime and air components, different levels of operational readiness and longer stand-by periods. A comprehensive and complete overview of all available elements will give us the necessary 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, using the substantially modified EU Battlegroups, Member States' military forces and capabilities, or a combination of the two.

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 intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.

We will develop these capabilities where necessary. 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. We will organise training and exercises within the EU framework to increase readiness and interoperability (also in line with NATO standards) of all the elements of this capacity. This is key if we want to overcome the obstacles that we have faced in the past.

More broadly, we must also strive for greater flexibility in our **decision-making process**, 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 practical modalities for implementing Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union, in accordance with CSDP decision making, to allow a group of willing and able Member States to plan and conduct a mission or operation within the EU framework and under the political oversight of the Council.

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, also in view of the new security context and the growing presence of our strategic competitors in operational theatres. 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. To this end, we will further adapt our current model of military missions and operations to increase their effectiveness on the ground. We will also explore other possibilities to provide more targeted advisory support to partner countries' security and defence organisations. The strategic communication tools should be further strengthened to better support our missions and operations.

Through an increased use of the **European Peace Facility**, the EU can rapidly provide important assistance to partners for example providing military equipment often supplementing training by CSDP missions. This can also be done by supporting partners' defence capabilities in moment of crisis, as in the case of the assistance package to support the Ukrainian armed forces to defend their territorial integrity and sovereignty and protect the civilian population from an unprovoked and unjustified aggression.

EU Member States also provide important contributions to securing EU's interests and peace and stability in the world through various forms of cooperation. Better coordination amongst these initiatives and EU actions should lead to mutual support and increased effectiveness. In this regard, our CSDP missions and operations and European-led *ad hoc* missions and operations 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. The EU could further support European-led *ad hoc* missions and operations that serve EU interests. They could benefit from the EU's political support and build on concrete results of 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's 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 in the North-West of the Indian Ocean, we will expand our **Coordinated Maritime Presences** to other areas of maritime interest that impact on the security of the EU and seek to associate relevant partners, where appropriate. We will also consolidate, and further develop as appropriate, our two naval 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, organised crime, radicalisation and violent extremism.

The **civilian CSDP Compact** helps us to further develop and strengthen 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 effectiveness, flexibility and responsiveness of civilian missions, including through speeding up our decision-making, strengthening operational planning, improving selection and recruitment of personnel and improving responsiveness tools, including specialised teams. To this end, we will also build on research, development and innovation. 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 and the EU's **justice and home affairs** actors, including agencies such as EUROPOL, EUROJUST, CEPOL and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), is necessary to jointly address relevant security challenges. We can build on the positive experiences, such as in Libya, Ukraine, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa 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, in line with EU priorities. This includes shared situational awareness, regular consultations and exchanges, as well as tailored sequential or plug-in deployments. To ensure appropriate buy-in, we will also increase cooperation with national justice and home affairs actors, including at political level.

We need to gradually 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 and information systems, as well as required facilities. Once the Military Planning and Conduct Capability reaches its full operational capability, it should be seen as the preferred command and control structure. This will not affect our ability to continue using the pre-identified national operational Headquarters. The Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability will also be strengthened to improve its ability to plan, command and control current and 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 personnel, 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 will also continue to contribute to the protection of cultural heritage, including through our CSDP missions and operations.

We are strongly committed to delivering on the EU objectives on **women, peace and security**. Tackling gender inequalities and gender-based violence is a critical aspect of the prevention and resolution of conflict as well as for 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 different needs of women, men and girls and boys. We will further promote **gender equality** and systematically mainstream a gender perspective, based on gender analysis, in all civilian and military CSDP planning and actions, focusing also on the equal and meaningful participation of women in all functions, including in leadership positions. We also commit to delivering on the EU objectives on the **children and armed conflict** agenda. EU external action has an essential role in contributing to ending and preventing grave violations against conflict-affected children and thus breaking cycles of violence, including through civilian and military CSDP actions.

## Prepare together

If a Member State is a victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States. Commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation. We will continue to invest in our **mutual assistance** under Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union as well as **solidarity** under Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in particular through frequent exercises.

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. In this regard, we will strengthen cooperation between EU and national operational planners.

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 enhancing transparency and predictability in the rotation of troops and by expanding the scope of common costs under the European Peace Facility. 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, as well as reinforced advance planning, 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.

Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has confirmed the urgent need to substantially enhance the **military mobility** of our armed forces within and beyond the Union. We will strengthen dual use transport infrastructure across the trans-European transport network in order to promote rapid and seamless movement of military personnel, materiel and equipment for operational deployments and exercises, working in close cooperation with NATO and other partners. We will agree on new commitments to accelerate and harmonise cross-border procedures, identify ways to sustain short-notice large scale movements, 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, taking into account the constitutional requirements of certain Member States. We will also link our work on military mobility with table-top and live exercises of Member States' armed forces.

## ➤ Objectives

We aim to become a more assertive security and defence actor by enabling more robust, rapid and decisive action, including for the resilience of the Union and our mutual assistance and solidarity. Advance planning will be the norm and existing command and control structures will be enhanced. We will be better prepared through live exercises and a more integrated approach to crises.

### ➤ Act

- By 2025, an **EU Rapid Deployment Capacity**, allowing the swift deployment of a modular force of up to 5,000 troops in a non-permissive environment, will be fully operational. To this end, we will agree on operational scenarios in 2022. Starting from 2023, regular live exercises will contribute to readiness and interoperability.

- By 2023, we will decide on practical modalities for the implementation of **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 and under the political oversight of the Council.

- By 2025, the **Military Planning and Conduct Capability** will be able to plan and conduct all non-executive military missions and two small-scale or one medium-scale executive operation/s, as well as live exercises. As a next step and upon achievement of this objective, we will also work to further expand our ability to plan and conduct additional non-executive missions and executive operations.

- We will further **strengthen our civilian and military CSDP missions and operations**. As a first step, by mid-2022, we will further adapt our current model of military missions to increase their effectiveness on the ground. We will also explore ways to strengthen our two naval operations. At the same time, we will look into other possibilities to provide targeted advisory support to partner countries' security and defence organisation.

- We will strengthen **mutual support between CSDP missions and operations and European-led *ad hoc* missions and operations**, in line with their respective mandates. By end of 2022, as a first step, we will establish links in theatre for example between EUNAVFOR Atalanta and the European Maritime Awareness Mission in the Strait of Hormuz, as well as in the Sahel.

- Building on the experience of the **Coordinated Maritime Presences** concept in the Gulf of Guinea and its expansion in the North-West of the Indian Ocean, as of the second half of 2022 we will consider other maritime areas of interest.

- By 2023, we will agree on a military concept for **air security operations**, including air support, rescue and evacuation, surveillance and disaster relief tasks.

- By mid-2023, we will adopt a new **Civilian CSDP Compact** that will further increase our missions' effectiveness and help developing the necessary civilian capabilities. We will also further enhance cooperation between relevant EU and Member States' justice and home affairs actors and CSDP. We will be able to deploy a **civilian CSDP mission** of 200 fully equipped experts within 30 days, including in complex environments.

- We will systematically mainstream a **human rights** and **gender perspective** in all civilian and military CSDP actions and increase the number of women in all functions, including leadership positions. By 2023, we will strengthen our network of human rights and gender advisers in our CSDP missions and operations.

## ➤ Prepare

- We will continue to conduct regular exercises to further strengthen our **mutual assistance** in case of an armed aggression, in accordance with Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union. This will comprise regular cyber exercises starting from 2022.

- Starting from 2023, we will organise regular **live exercises** in all domains, with the progressive involvement of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability. These exercises will also combine civilian and military CSDP elements.

- By 2022, we will agree on a **Troop Rotation Cycle Register** for CSDP military missions and operations and strengthen early political force sensing for both civilian and military CSDP missions and operations.

- By 2023, also in view of proposals regarding the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity, we will re-assess the scope and definition of **common costs** to enhance solidarity and stimulate participation in military missions and operations, as well as exercise-related costs.

- By the end of 2022, we will take new commitments with the aim to substantially enhance and invest in **military mobility** and will agree on an ambitious, revised Action Plan. This will comprise new actions in areas such as digitalisation, increasing cyber resilience of transport infrastructure and its support systems, as well as the use of artificial intelligence and air and sea lift to improve military mobility within and beyond the EU. For the future, we will further increase and leverage investment for Military Mobility[1].
  - We will immediately accelerate the implementation of the dual-use transport infrastructure projects including by frontloading the military mobility budget in the framework of the Action Plan on Military Mobility and the Connecting Europe Facility.
  - By the end of 2022, we will launch an analysis of the EU transport infrastructure capability to sustain short-notice large-scale movements.
  - By 2025, we will complete the improvement and harmonisation of cross-border procedures.

1 This will be done without prejudice to the next EU multiannual financial framework.

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# 3. SECURE

We need to best prepare for fast-emerging challenges. Our strategic competitors are targeting 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 maritime, air, 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 significantly 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 our early warning, intelligence picture and 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 Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity as single entry point for strategic intelligence contributions from Member States' civilian and military intelligence and security services. This will facilitate the exchange of strategic intelligence to better respond to the 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 adequate European communication systems. A strengthened intelligence picture will 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 European 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 substantially enhance our **resilience** and ability to counter **hybrid threats**, cyberattacks and foreign information manipulation and interference. State and non-state foreign actors are constantly refining and thereby strengthening their tactics, techniques and procedures, such as the instrumentalisation of irregular migration, lawfare, as well as coercion targeting our economic and energy security. A wide range of 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 should comprise for instance preventive, cooperative, stabilisation, restrictive and recovery measures, as well as strengthen solidarity and mutual assistance. Member States may propose coordinated attribution of hybrid activities, recognising that attribution is a sovereign national prerogative. Our response requires the full mobilisation of all relevant civilian and military instruments where appropriate, drawing from external and internal policies. It also needs to be based on a common understanding and assessment of these threats. Therefore, we will strengthen our ability to detect, identify and analyse such threats and their source. In this regard, the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC), in particular the **Hybrid Fusion Cell**, will provide foresight and situational awareness. As part of this broader EU Hybrid Toolbox, we need to bolster our **societal and economic resilience**, protect critical infrastructure, as well as our democracies and EU and national electoral processes. We will also create **EU Hybrid Rapid Response Teams** adaptable to the threat and drawing on relevant sectoral national and EU civilian and military expertise to support Member States, CSDP missions and operations and partner countries in countering hybrid threats. We will ensure synergies and explore further avenues for counter-hybrid cooperation with NATO.

We must also be able to swiftly and forcefully respond to cyberattacks, such as state-sponsored malicious cyber activities targeting critical infrastructure and ransomware attacks. To this end, we will reinforce our ability to identify and analyse cyberattacks in a coordinated manner. 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 and cooperation between EU Institutions and Member States.

We will firmly respond to foreign information manipulation and interference, as we did through our decisive and coordinated action against Russia's disinformation campaign in the context of its military aggression against Ukraine. We will continue to do so 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 enhance our societal resilience, we will also strengthen access to credible information and free and independent media across the Union. To this end, and as called for in the European Democracy Action Plan, we will develop the **EU toolbox to address and counter foreign information manipulation and interference**, including in our CSDP missions and operations. It will strengthen our response options, our resilience capacities and cooperation both within the EU and in support of partner countries, and improve situational awareness via the Rapid

Alert System. We will also take forward the joint operational mechanism on electoral processes and a possible designation of election infrastructure as critical infrastructure. We will continue to work with like-minded partners, such as NATO, the G7 as well as civil society and private sector 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 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 using all available EU tools. We will further signal our determination to provide immediate and long-term responses to threat actors seeking to deny a secure and open access to cyberspace to the EU and its partners. We will support our partners in enhancing their cyber resilience and, in cases of cyber crises, deploy EU and Member States' experts to offer support. 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 will increase interoperability and information sharing through cooperation between military computer emergency response teams (mil CERT), as well as in the conduct of defensive cyber operations. 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 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. To this end, we will work on the proposal for an EU space-based global secure communication system, including through the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for 2023-2027.

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 and capabilities to react better and faster to crises, strengthen our resilience and make full use of the benefits and opportunities linked to the space domain. Such a strategy should for instance include political, operational, diplomatic and governance dimensions.

We will continue to invest in **space situational awareness** to better understand and reduce space-based risks, threats and vulnerabilities. We will strengthen dual-use innovation and invest in capability development in order for Europe to benefit from an autonomous access to space. We will protect space supply chains and invest in critical space technologies in coordination with the European Defence Agency and the European Space Agency. We will also strengthen the resilience of related European supply chains to ensure the integrity, the security and the operations of space infrastructure. 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, building upon the Joint Communication from the Commission and the High Representative. 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. We aim to also further strengthen solidarity, mutual assistance and crisis response in case of attacks originating from space or threats to space-based assets, including through exercises.

The **air domain** is critical to secure our territories and populations as well as for international trade and travel. State and non-state actors are challenging our security, both on EU territory and beyond, for instance by hijacking civilian planes as well as the increasing use of drones and new technologies. Advanced military capabilities such as unmanned aerial vehicles, mid and long range air defences, and modern aircraft proliferate worldwide and increasingly challenge the safe and unconstrained use of the airspace. Free and secure access to the airspace is also being challenged by anti-access and area denial strategies of our competitors, notably in our neighbourhood. In close cooperation with relevant civil aviation stakeholders as well as NATO, we will take forward a strategic reflection to preserve our uncontested access to the airspace.

Building on an update of the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan, we will further invest in our **maritime security** and global 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, trafficking, 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, including on our seabeds, 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 continue to develop joint operational, capability and technological solutions, including by making 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 and political dialogue, stabilisation efforts, programmes for preventing and countering violent extremism and cooperation in the area of rule of law, while promoting full respect of human rights and international 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 disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

We will uphold, support and further advance the **disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control** framework. We will continue to support the centrality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and stress the need to implement all obligations under it, and commitments during previous Review Conferences, including the need for concrete progress towards the full implementation of Article VI, with the ultimate goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons. We are resolved to seek a safer and more secure world for all in accordance with the goals of the Treaty in a way that promotes international stability, peace and security. We need to increase our capacities to control intangible transfers, including scientific knowledge where necessary. This entails protecting and reinforcing existing export control regimes. Confronted with new challenges emerging from new technologies, the EU remains committed to preserve the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control architecture. A coordinated approach with partners is also 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 partners, notably the United States and NATO. We will further work on this issue. We will continue to call for reduction of arsenals by the States with the largest nuclear arsenal through post-New START agreements, including strategic and non-strategic, deployed nuclear weapons, and further discussions on confidence-building measures, verification, 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** as well as degradation of eco-systems across the globe that increase vulnerability and exposure. This adds to the potential for social, economic and 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. It therefore has direct implications also for our security and defence. A transition to climate-neutral economies may have social, economic and political impacts that can amplify conflict-prone situations. We are further 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 and increase energy and resource efficiency, including the environmental footprint of our CSDP missions and operations, in line with the Union's goal of climate-neutrality by 2050 under the European Green Deal, without reducing operational effectiveness. To this end, we will enhance the role of green technology and sustainable digitalisation within the armed forces and the defence sector more broadly. We will also mainstream climate change and environmental considerations throughout our civilian and military CSDP missions and operations. We will furthermore strengthen our analysis capacities and early warning systems as to the specific security challenges triggered by climate change and the global transition towards a climate-neutral, 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. The EU Military Staff can also contribute to the coordination of logistical support and assistance to Member States and third countries in a crisis, as well as the implementation of EU instruments such as the European Peace Facility or, upon Member States' request, the mutual assistance clause, in line with the Treaty on European Union. The EEAS crisis response mechanisms, our consular support and field security will also be reviewed and strengthened to better assist Member States in 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 need to best prepare for fast-emerging challenges. We will substantially enhance our resilience. We will bring together our tools to better counter hybrid threats by developing a 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, in the air 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 climate-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. All these efforts contribute to strengthening our solidarity and mutual assistance.

### ➤ Intelligence and secure communication

- By the end of 2022, the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity will review the **EU Threat Analysis** in close cooperation with Member States' intelligence services. Such regular and structured reviews will be conducted at least every 3 years or sooner if the changing strategic and security context calls for it.

- 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, including classified 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

- In 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, comprising for instance preventive, cooperative, stability, restrictive and recovery measures and support solidarity and mutual assistance. It will bring together existing and possible new instruments, including the creation of EU Hybrid Rapid Response Teams to support Member States, CSDP missions and operations and partner countries in countering hybrid threats. Based on the EU's sectoral hybrid resilience baselines and the current security situation, we will identify gaps, needs and steps to address them. The EU Playbook on countering hybrid threats will also be reviewed.

- In 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 detect, analyse and respond to the threat, including by imposing costs on perpetrators. We will further enhance the EU's strategic communication and counter disinformation 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.

## Strategic domains

- In 2022, we will further develop the EU's **Cyber Defence Policy** to protect, detect, defend and deter against cyberattacks. In 2022, a new European **Cyber Resilience Act** will be proposed and work on the **Joint Cyber Unit** will continue.

- By the end of 2023, we will adopt an **EU Space Strategy for security and defence**. We will start with the validation of the Galileo threat response mechanism by the end of 2022 and expand it to other components of the programme. By the end of 2022, we will explore the use of solidarity, mutual assistance and crisis response mechanisms in case of attacks originating from space or threats to space-based assets. To this end, we will also run exercises where solidarity and reaction to space domain events and incidents will be tested, which will further nurture our common strategic approach to space.

- On the basis of an updated EU Maritime Security Strategy, we will by 2025 further develop and strengthen the EU's **maritime security** awareness mechanisms such as the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) and Maritime Surveillance (MARSUR) to advance interoperability, facilitate decision-making and support increased operational effectiveness. We will further increase the visibility of our naval presence within and beyond the EU, including through port calls, training and exercises as well as capacity building.

- By the end of 2022, in the **air domain**, we will take forward a strategic reflection to ensure a free, safe and secure European access to airspace.

## Countering terrorism

- We will step up our engagement with strategic partners and in multilateral fora, and further strengthen the network of Counter Terrorism Experts in EU Delegations. By early 2023, we will review EU tools and programmes which contribute to building partners' capacities against terrorism to increase their effectiveness, including combating terrorism financing.

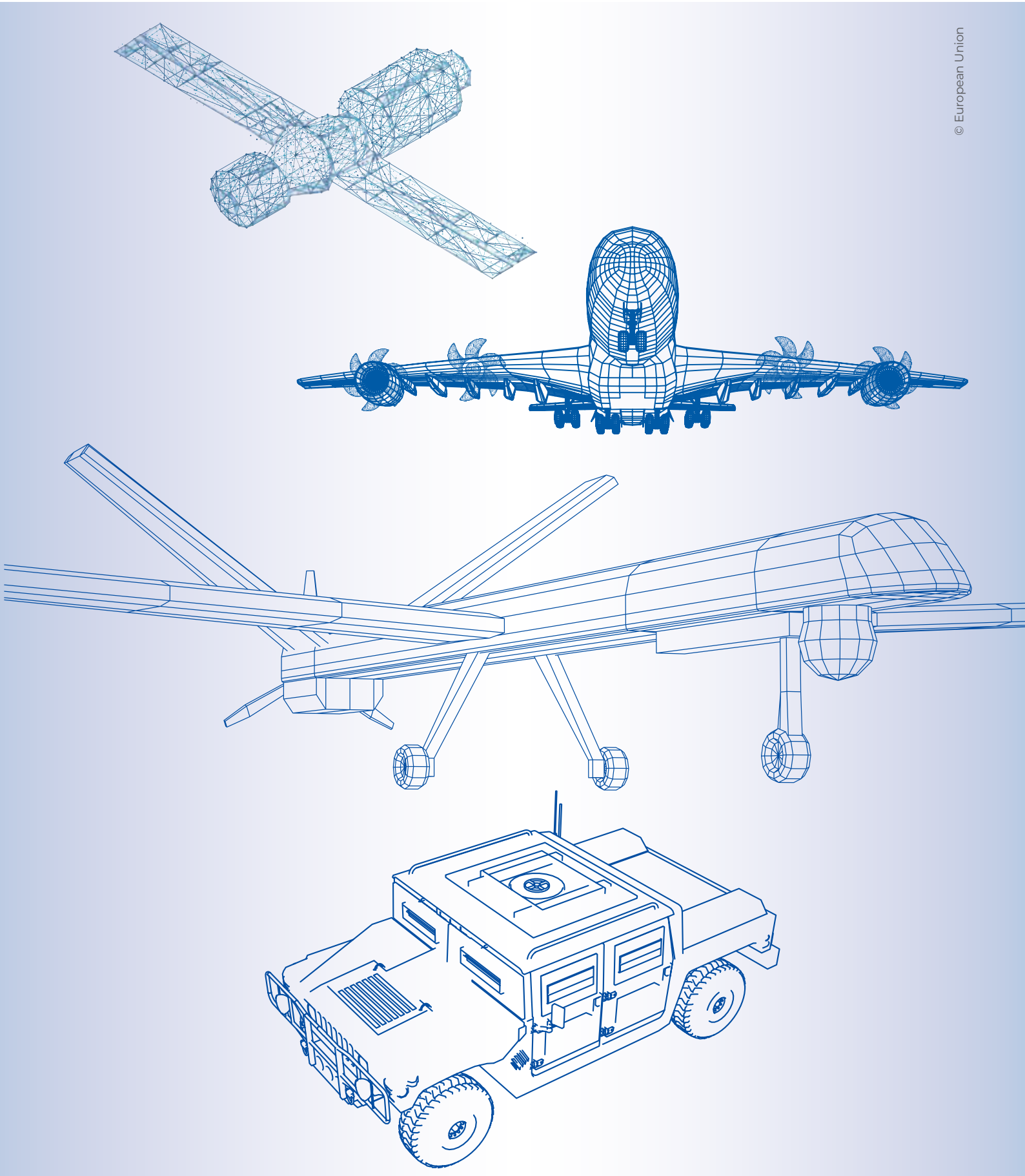
## Promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

- By 2023, we will reinforce concrete **EU actions in support of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control goals**. We will in particular increase our support to partners and help them fully implement sanctions and control procedures. We will continue to call for post-New START agreements.

## Climate change, disasters and emergencies

- By the end of 2023, in view of fully implementing the **Climate Change and Defence** Roadmap, Member States will develop national strategies to prepare the armed forces for climate change. By 2025, all CSDP missions and operations will have an environmental advisor and report on their environmental footprint.

- We will improve the **ability of Member States' armed forces to support civilian authorities** in emergency situations both in the planning and conduct phases, while also enhancing coordination between civil and military authorities at all levels. This will include live and joint exercises that cover scenarios pertaining to disaster relief, as well as humanitarian assistance in line with humanitarian principles. By 2023, we will strengthen the **EEAS Crisis Response structures**, including the **Situation Room**, to enhance our capacity to respond to complex emergencies, such as evacuation and rescue operation abroad, in close cooperation with the Emergency Response Coordination Centre.



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# 4. INVEST

In line with the Versailles agenda, and in view of the challenges we face and in order to better protect our citizens, while acknowledging the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States, we must resolutely invest more and better in defence capabilities and innovative technologies, both at the EU and national levels. We need to strengthen our defence capabilities and equip our military forces for the challenges of the world we face. We must be bolder and faster in filling **critical capability gaps**, overcoming fragmentation, achieving full interoperability of our forces and strengthening 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. Achieving technological sovereignty in some critical technology areas, mitigating **strategic dependencies** in others, and reducing the vulnerability of our value chains are critical if we are to meet the challenges of a more dangerous world and be more resilient. Cooperating with like-minded partners around the world, on a reciprocal basis, is essential for enhancing the EU's resilience and security of supply, while reducing strategic dependencies and increasing mutual benefits.

## Strategic orientations

In line with commitments already made through PESCO and in view of the strategic challenges we are facing, it becomes urgent to **spend more and better**. We will therefore substantially increase our defence expenditures, with a significant share for investment, focusing on identified strategic shortfalls. We will ensure a coordinated and collaborative European approach for such enhanced expenditures at Member States' and at EU level, to maximise output, increase interoperability and make full use of economies of scale. To this end, we will define strategic orientations on the resources that are necessary to match our security needs and the full use of EU tools to incentivise collaborative defence investments.

In line with our agreed level of ambition, we will work together to swiftly 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 in other frameworks.

We will adapt the EU's **defence capability planning and development**, 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 responding to hybrid threats, securing access to strategic domains such as high seas, air, cyber and space, and providing military assistance to civilian authorities. We will further detail strategic

planning elements, such as response time, duration, environment, distance and simultaneousness of operations that are needed to adapt the capability planning scenarios. 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 embedded in **national defence planning**. We will continue to ensure that the results of these processes remain coherent with those 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. The introduction of the **Strategic Warehouse** and the **Mission Support Platform** has contributed to our ability to provide equipment and services for civilian CSDP missions. 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.

## 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 next generation aircraft systems, a Eurodrone, a new class of a European naval vessel and a main ground combat system. These will make a tangible difference to European security and 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 command and control systems, armoured vehicles, missile systems and artillery, patrol corvettes, unmanned air and maritime systems, electronic warfare capabilities, space surveillance, cyber rapid response 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. We will enhance our efforts to mitigate critical capability shortfalls such as strategic airlift, space-based connectivity and 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 developing the following strategic capabilities through collaborative projects, in particular:

- 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 and fully interoperable capabilities, notably future combat systems as well as air defence systems. We will progressively integrate the foreseen future combat 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 cutting edge technology sensors and platforms allowing the Union and its Member States 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 and navigation 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 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.

Significantly enhancing and harnessing the full potential of EU funding instruments, in particular the **European Defence Fund**, is key to strengthen our defence capabilities and also equip Member States' forces to face the future battlefields. We will further boost cooperation and capabilities so that defence industrial cooperation within the EU becomes the norm. This will maximise the potential of broader EU financial tools to support Member States' defence cooperation, from design to acquisition. 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 enhance and leverage collaborative defence investment at the EU level, including Research and Technology. 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 work to further incentivise joint procurement of defence capabilities that are developed in a collaborative way within the EU. This will require further work on the Commission's proposals, *inter alia* on a VAT waiver, new financing solutions and a potential reinforcement of the EDF bonus system.

We will also bring forward ongoing work towards the streamlining and gradual further convergence of our arms export control practices for defence capabilities jointly developed, in particular in an EU framework, thus ensuring European Defence Fund-funded products will profit from adequate and competitive access to international markets, in line with the 2008 Council Common Position defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment, and without prejudice to Member States' sovereign decisions.

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 will step up our efforts both at the national level and through a more ambitious use of EU instruments to be better prepared for the future battlefield and the next generation technology. 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. The Commission, in coordination with the European Defence Agency, will develop an EU Defence Innovation Scheme to accelerate security and defence innovation for the EU and its Member States.

An **innovative, competitive and resilient European Defence Technological and Industrial Base** which guarantees security of supply and cutting-edge technologies is more important than ever and key for employment, trade, investment, security and research in the EU. The European defence sector can also contribute to growth and the sustainable economic recovery following the pandemic. 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. The Roadmap on critical technologies for security and defence of the European Commission proposes a methodology for addressing these challenges through closer cooperation between the EU and Member States. This could also contribute to strengthening the resilience of the European economy and supply chains in line with the EU Global Gateway.

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. We will also foster synergies between civilian, defence and space research and innovation, and invest in critical and emerging technologies and innovation for security and defence. Strengthening the resilience of our supply chains and industries' access to private funding will be necessary for our European Defence Technological and Industrial Base. The European Investment Bank should also use all its tools to contribute to that effort. It is equally important to ensure that horizontal EU policies, such as initiatives on sustainable finance, remain consistent with the European Union efforts to facilitate the European defence industry's **sufficient access to public and private finance and investment**. 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. We will explore additional proposals to mitigate risks for companies which produce critical technologies and products and face non-EU acquisition. 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 and technological ecosystem**, support companies specialising in cybersecurity and further increase cybersecurity and cyberdefence resources and 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 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 will substantially enhance our defence expenditures to match our collective ambition to reduce critical military and civilian capability gaps. We will also strengthen our European Defence Technological and Industrial Base throughout the Union, which also ensures cross border participation of small and medium enterprises. In line with the binding commitments under Permanent Structured Cooperation, defence spending will be regularly increased in real terms to match our collective ambition in defence. For the future, we will further increase and leverage collaborative defence investment at the EU level, including Research and Technology, through the European Defence Fund[2]. 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. We will also cooperate with like-minded partners around the world, on a reciprocal basis, to increase mutual benefits.

### ➤ Defence expenditures

- By mid-2022, in full respect of national prerogatives and consistent with our commitments, including those made in other organisations, we will exchange on our national **objectives on increased and improved defence spending** to match our security needs, maximise output, increase interoperability and make full use of economies of scale, including through a coordinated and collaborative European approach and the full use of EU tools.

- We invite the Commission, in coordination with the European Defence Agency, to put forward **an analysis of the defence investment gaps** by mid-May and to propose any further initiative necessary to strengthen the European defence industrial and technological base.

- The Commission will **develop additional incentives** to stimulate Member States' collaborative investments in strategic defence capabilities, notably those that are to be developed and/or jointly procured in European Union cooperative frameworks, and will report on the developments, barriers and opportunities related to multinational defence capability projects in the Annual Single Market report.

### ➤ 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. Detailed strategic planning elements that are needed to adapt the capability planning scenarios will be developed by mid-2022.

2 This will be done without prejudice to the next EU multiannual financial framework.

- 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 reduce by 2025 critical gaps on **strategic enablers**, in particular linked to the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity, such as strategic airlift, space communication assets, amphibious capabilities, medical assets, cyber defence capabilities and Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities.

- Within this decade and beyond, we will focus our capability development efforts on next generation capabilities in all domains, including at system and subsystem level along the focus areas identified by CARD, in particular:

  - 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 unmanned platforms.
  - In the **Air domain**, we will develop future combat systems as a next generation and fully interoperable capability to ensure air advantage. This will be complemented by Countering Unmanned Aerial Systems and contributes to establishing a European standard for Anti Access Area Denial capacities.
  - In the **Space domain**, we will develop new sensors and platforms for Space-Based Earth Observation, as well as technologies for Space Situational Awareness and Space-Based communication services.
  - In the **Cyber domain**, we will intensify our efforts to develop and connect our capabilities to provide the necessary resilience and ability to act in all domains, particularly focusing on the Enhanced Military Mobility, which is an essential enabler.

- By 2023, in order to preserve the ability to develop capabilities in Europe, we will take measures to promote and facilitate the **access to private funding** for the defence industry, also by making best use of the European Investment Bank.

- We will develop further incentives to stimulate Member States' collaborative investments in **joint projects** and **joint procurement** of defence capabilities that are developed in a collaborative way within the EU. This includes, *inter alia*:
  - By early 2023, work on a Commission proposal that would enable a **VAT waiver** to support the joint procurement and ownership of defence capabilities developed in a collaborative way within the EU;
  - By mid-2023, work on upcoming proposals for **new financing solutions** to facilitate Member States' joint procurement of EU strategic defence capabilities;
  - Following the interim evaluation of the EDF, work on a possible amendment to the European Defence Fund Regulation to adjust and reinforce the **EDF bonus system** when Member States commit to jointly acquire and/or own the defence capabilities under development.

## ➤ Strategic technologies and dependencies in security and defence

- In 2022, we will establish a **Defence Innovation Hub** within the European Defence Agency, working in partnership with the Commission to exploit synergies with its related work-strands, including the EU Defence Innovation Scheme. The parameters of this Hub will be defined within the framework of the European Defence Agency.

- As of 2022, we will further identify strategic dependencies in the defence sector through the **Observatory on critical technologies** and act to reduce them by mobilising EU and Member States' instruments and policies, and exploring any possible gaps in those available. We will work together with the Commission and the EDA on developing an EU-wide strategic coordinated approach from the outset for critical technologies relevant for security and defence. In this regard, we will also build on EDA's work on Key Strategic Activities. We will continue using the **EU Foreign and Direct Investment Screening Framework** in case an investment in the EU defence sector threatens security or public order. We will explore additional proposals to mitigate such risks for the EU defence sector.

- As of 2022, we will further boost research, technology development and innovation throughout the EU and reduce our **strategic dependencies** in technologies and value chains critical for security and defence, on the basis of EDA's Overarching Strategic Research Agenda and the Roadmap on critical technologies for security and defence proposed by the European Commission.

- In 2023, we will assess, together with the Commission, the risk for our **supply chains of critical infrastructure**, in particular in the digital domain, to better protect the EU's security and defence interests.

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# 5. PARTNER

Partnerships are an essential instrument to support the EU's ambition to be global strategic player. Partners will also benefit from a stronger and more capable EU in security and defence. They can help us **uphold the 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**, serve EU interests and support our values, particularly when there is a shared commitment to an integrated approach to conflict and crises, capacity building and resilience. Close alignment on CFSP issues is also key in this respect, in particular on issues where common interests are at stake. 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 as demonstrated again in the context of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine in 2022. 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 and 2018 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 political dialogue, information sharing, 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 as well as the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. 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 and the principles of the UN Charter, 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 and support the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Secretary General's report "Our Common Agenda" including the "New agenda for peace". We will substantially step up our political dialogue with the UN through high-level political engagement and 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 peace operations and crisis management 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. We will also continue promoting the Women Peace and Security agenda and enhance our cooperation with regard to Children in Armed Conflict.

If the EU and UN are to meet the challenges of the future, a more dynamic approach to **early warning, conflict prevention and mediation** is required. Structured exchange of information, joint horizon scanning, strategic foresight and gender responsive 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 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 **confidence-building measures** and **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.

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, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). 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, including African-led Peace Support Operations. In this context, we will promote the implementation of the AU human rights compliance framework. 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, as well as improve coordination between the three African members (A3) and EU Members States in the UN Security Council.

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 in 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 **tailored 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 **Norway**, as our most closely associated partner through the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA), as well as with **Canada**, with whom our long standing cooperation in security and defence demonstrate our joint commitment to peace and security. 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 threat to the sovereignty, stability, territorial integrity and governance of our **Eastern partners**, we will boost our cooperation in the area of security and defence with a view to strengthening their resilience. We will continue to support Ukraine and its people together with our international partners, including through additional political, financial, humanitarian and logistical support. The challenges faced by Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, including hostile interference by Russia and the extensive use of military instruments and hybrid tactics, compromise their stability and their democratic processes and have direct implications for our own security. We will therefore continue to closely cooperate with those countries and reiterate our unwavering support for, and commitment to, their sovereignty and territorial integrity. As close partners to the EU, specific dialogues and cooperation with Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova will be strengthened, in particular 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 by using different tools, including 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 increasing challenges regarding 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. 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. This is even more important as we are witnessing a growing presence of our strategic competitors, from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa. We will seek to establish security and defence dialogues and cooperation 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, disinformation and cyberattacks, as well as climate change. We will seek the engagement of capable partners in Africa in our CSDP missions and operations as well as increase our support to their efforts against instability and terrorism.

Through our EU Indo-Pacific Strategy, we will seek to promote an open and rules-based regional security architecture, including secure sea lines of communication, capacity-building and enhanced naval presence in the **Indo-Pacific**. 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 international law of the sea, peaceful settlement of disputes and a rules-based international order and human rights.

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, international law and human rights, democratic oversight and capacity to respond to hybrid threats, 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.

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## ➤ 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, disinformation and cyberattacks. Our approach will also address partners' need for capacity building and support.

### ➤ Multilateral

- From 2022, building upon the 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 gender responsive 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 **OSCE, African Union** and **ASEAN** in areas such as conflict prevention, shared situational awareness and resilience. In addition, we will:
  - Seek to develop a joint dedicated roadmap with the **OSCE** on conflict prevention and crisis management with concrete regional and thematic actions;
  - Renew and enhance our cooperation with the African Union, in line with the EU-AU Summit of February 2022. We will in particular foster our support to adequate training, capacity building and equipment, strengthening and scaling up autonomous African-led peace operations, including through EU missions and assistance measures, as well as law-enforcement capacity-building. 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.

## Bilateral

- We will pursue a closer and mutually beneficial cooperation with the **United States**. As of 2022, we will move forward with a dedicated security and defence dialogue on the basis of the Summit Statement of June 2021.

- We will deepen our cooperation with **Norway** and **Canada** on the basis of the existing dialogues. We remain open to engage with the **United Kingdom** on security and defence.

- We will strengthen dialogues on security and defence with our partners in the **Western Balkans**, our **eastern and southern neighbourhoods**, the **Indo-Pacific** and **Latin America**. In addition, we will in particular:

  - Strengthen our security and defence cooperation with the **Eastern partners** with a view to strengthening their resilience, including against hybrid attacks and cyber threats, and boost tailored support and capacity building in the area of security and defence;
  - Support efforts to strengthen the resilience of our partners in the **Western Balkans**;
  - Offer more comprehensive security packages to partners in the **southern neighbourhood**;
  - Seek to further associate **African partners** to our security and defence efforts on the continent and support African-led initiatives contributing to peace and security, in particular African-led peace operations, in line with the EU-AU Summit of 2022;
  - Conduct, by 2023, live maritime exercises with partners in the **Indo-Pacific** in addition to more frequent EU port calls and patrols.

- Complementing our crisis management efforts, we will make full use of the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument and other relevant EU programmes as well as increase the use of the European Peace Facility to intensify capacity building, and **train and equip** our partners in Africa, our eastern and southern neighbourhood as well as the Western Balkans, and to strengthen their resilience against hybrid threats.

- To boost our international diplomatic efforts in the security and defence domain, we will increase the network of **military advisors** and **counter-terrorism experts** in EU Delegations.

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# 6. CONCLUSION

The world we are facing is changing rapidly and drastically. A major war has broken out in Europe. As European Union we are taking immediate and unprecedented actions. We are defending the European and global security order together with our partners. And we are strengthening our geopolitical posture.

This Strategic Compass details how the European Union and its Member States will **strengthen our security and defence**. Over the next decade, we will make a quantum leap 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. We must invest more and better. More targeted and coordinated 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. In light of the current security challenges, we must rapidly 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 a European Council meeting to provide political guidance for our efforts. Based on the revised threat analysis in 2025 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.

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