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A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence

For a European Union that Protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Major geopolitical shifts are challenging Europe's ability to promote its vision and defend its interests. We live in an era of strategic competition and complex security threats. We see conflicts and sources of instability increasing in our neighbourhood and beyond, often compounded by the threat-multiplier effect of climate change. Hybrid threats are growing both in frequency and impact. Interdependence is increasingly conflictual and soft power weaponised: vaccines, data and technology standards are all instruments of political competition. Our access to the high seas, outer space and the digital sphere is increasingly contested. **This more hostile security environment requires us to increase our capacity and willingness to act and strengthen our resilience**. Europe cannot afford to be a bystander in a world order that is mainly shaped by others. Lack of unity, passivity, delays and poor coordination carry a real cost. Conversely, willingness to act, joint efforts and investments enable us to ensure the security of our citizens, building upon the Union's fundamental values.

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

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

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

ACT

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

1. **Reinforce our civilian and military CSDP missions and operations** by providing them with more robust and flexible mandates, promoting **rapid and more flexible decision-making** and ensuring greater **financial solidarity**, while also promoting close cooperation with European-led ad hoc coalitions. We will strengthen our civilian CSDP through a new Compact;
2. Develop an **EU Rapid Deployment Capacity**, consisting of flexible and interoperable modules, that will allow us to swiftly deploy up to 5000 troops for different types of crises;
3. Strengthen our **command and control structures**, in particular the Military Planning and Conduct Capability, and increase our readiness and cooperation through **regular live exercises**, in particular for the Rapid Deployment Capacity.

SECURE

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

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

INVEST

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

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

PARTNER

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

Concretely it:

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

c. stimulate investments and innovation to jointly develop the necessary capabilities and technologies;
d. deepen our cooperation with partners, notably the UN and NATO, to achieve common goals;

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

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

1. THE WORLD WE FACE

To prepare this Strategic Compass, we conducted the first-ever comprehensive **EU Threat Analysis** in 2020. This helped develop a common understanding of the threats and challenges that the EU will face in the near future. To build a common strategic culture, we will regularly revisit the Threat Analysis, at least every 5 years, starting in 2025, or sooner if the changing strategic and security context calls for it.

The overall security landscape has become more diverse, 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 religious and ethnic tensions, are increasingly entangled with non-conventional and transnational threats and geopolitical power rivalry. This erodes the capacity of the multilateral system to prevent and mitigate risks and crises.

Our strategic environment

Today, the EU is surrounded by **instability** and conflicts. We face a dangerous mix of armed aggression, illegal annexation, fragile states, revisionist powers and authoritarian regimes. This environment is a breeding ground for multiple threats to European security from terrorism, violent extremism and organised crime to hybrid conflicts, arms proliferation and irregular migration. 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. Tangible progress on the rule of law and reforms based on European values, rules and standards needs to continue and the European perspective must remain a guiding beacon. In our **eastern neighbourhood**, Ukraine, Moldova and the South Caucasus are trapped in open and frozen conflicts. Authoritarianism in Belarus is translated into repression at home and hybrid tactics against the EU. In our **southern neighbourhood**, the crises in Libya and Syria remain unresolved, with lasting and pervasive regional consequences. Finally, tensions in the **Eastern Mediterranean** over borders, irregular migration flows and energy exploration rights remain and have the potential to escalate quickly; ensuring a constructive and positive relationship is in the interest of both the EU and Turkey.

Combined, these challenges affect the security of our citizens, our critical infrastructure and the integrity of our borders. The impact of a strongly deteriorated relationship with Russia is particularly severe in many of these theatres. It interferes actively through hybrid tactics, compromising the stability of countries and their democratic processes. This also has direct implications for our own security.

As our closest neighbour, 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 violent conflict, poor governance and terrorism across the continent affect our own security. This is in particular the case in Mali and the wider **Sahel region** where instability, terrorist groups, weak State structures and widespread poverty constitute a dangerous mix and call for sustained EU engagement. As key trade routes, stability in the **Gulf of Guinea** and the **Horn of Africa** remain a major security imperative for the EU. At the same time, we see growing geopolitical competition in Africa, with an increased presence of both global and regional actors. Some of them do not hesitate to use irregular forces in zones of instability, thereby undermining international efforts towards peace and stability.

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

A new centre of global competition has emerged in the **Indo-Pacific**. 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. Indeed, geopolitical tensions in the Indo-Pacific endanger the regional rules-based order. The EU has a crucial interest to ensure that international law prevails in the maritime and other domains.

Elsewhere in **Asia**, Afghanistan will continue to pose serious security concerns for the Union in terms of terrorism, the smuggling of drugs and irregular migration flows. Certain regional actors, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, continue to endanger regional and international peace and security, through its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes but also increasingly through intelligence operations, cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns. Persistent older conflicts also continue to hamper the development of comprehensive pan-regional security arrangements.

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

Emerging 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. Many state and non-state actors are using **hybrid tactics** such as **disinformation**, direct **interference** in our elections and political processes and the instrumentalisation of irregular migration flows. 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. Notwithstanding the principle of the peaceful use of **outer space**, competition in this domain has strong defence implications. It is key for observation, monitoring and communication capabilities, but it is at risk of becoming a weaponised domain. Maritime zones, critical sea lanes of communication and several maritime chokepoints, are increasingly contested, from the Gulf of Aden to the Strait of Hormuz and beyond the Strait of Malacca.

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

A contested multipolar world

The EU has been a determined supporter of **effective multilateralism** and it has sought to develop an open **rules-based international order**, based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, universal values and international law as enshrined in the UN Charter. This vision of multilateralism prevailed internationally following the end of the Soviet Union. 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 quite complex. It is based on the combination of two dynamics. On one side, a rising bipolarity between the United States and China which is structuring the international competition in virtually all areas. On the other, multipolar dynamics through which an increasing number of actors seek to expand their political space. The United States remains a global power who has contributed to peace, stability and democracy on our continent in the last century and the EU's staunchest international partner. But its shift towards Asia is undeniable. China is also a global power with different agendas, ambitions and capabilities that shapes international geopolitics. Russia, the EU's largest neighbour, remains an important global actor who attempts to

widen its geopolitical sphere of influence based mostly on a zero-sum logic. In this context, the EU aims to play an active part as a global player by promoting its own value-based vision of a safer and more just world.

The illegal annexation of Crimea and support to the Donbass conflict since 2014 mark a watershed in our relations with **Russia**. Its actions in our common neighbourhood and in other theatres contradict the EU's vision of the world and its interests. Use of hybrid tactics, cyberattacks and disinformation are part of the reality in dealing with Russia. This should nevertheless not be seen as a historic inevitability. Many common interests and a shared culture in fact link the EU and Russia. That is why the EU strategy aims at engaging Russia in some specific issues on which we have shared priorities such as climate change while pushing back aggressive acts and constraining its capacity to undermine EU's interests.

China is a partner, an economic competitor and a systemic rival. With China as a partner, we can address matters of global concern such as climate change. China is increasingly both involved and engaged in regional tensions. As an economic competitor and systemic rival, China gains advantages through our divisions, tends to limit access to its market and seeks to promote globally its own standards. It pursues its policies including through its growing presence at sea, in space and online. 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 greater global security. This requires strong unity amongst us and working closely with other regional and global partners.

Strategic implications for the Union

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

This task could not be more urgent. While since the EU Global Strategy of 2016 we have reinforced our work to strengthen the EU's role in security and defence, we recognise that there is a new strategic landscape emerging that requires us to act with a **far greater sense of urgency and determination**. The moment for decisive steps is now. The cost of inaction or "business as usual" is real.

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

This Strategic Compass sets out how we will **act** and be prepared to respond to various crises and challenges. It also specifies how we should anticipate threats, **secure** our interests and protect our citizens. This in turn requires that we innovate and **invest** in technologically superior and

interoperable defence capabilities and reduce technology and resource dependencies. In all these efforts, we must deepen **partnerships** where it serves EU values and interests.

2. ACT

We need to step up our efforts to prepare for future crises and threats and to project stability, in our neighbourhood and beyond. 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. We will act in an integrated way by making the best use of all available EU policies and instruments. We will enhance our capacity to undertake the full range of civilian and military **crisis management** tasks that are at the core of our Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), as mentioned in Article 43 of the Treaty on European Union.

Acting together

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

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

For an effective deployment, we commit to providing associated assets and the necessary strategic enablers, in particular strategic transport, force protection, medical assets, cyber defence, space 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 deployability of this capacity.

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

More **robust and flexible** mandates for CSDP civilian and military missions and operations should allow us to adapt swiftly to new threats and challenges and increase their effectiveness. Our CSDP

missions and operations and European-led *ad hoc* coalitions acting in the same or adjacent theatres should mutually reinforce each other through operational coordination, logistics, intelligence sharing and joint medical evacuation capacities. This means developing closer links, notably in the Sahel, Horn of Africa and Strait of Hormuz. European-led *ad hoc* coalitions could also benefit from the EU's political support and from activities funded through the European Peace Facility.

We commit to further asserting our interests at sea and enhancing the EU and Member States maritime security. Building on our experience in the Gulf of Guinea, we will expand our **Coordinated Maritime Presences** to other areas of interest to the EU, such as the Indo-Pacific. We will also consolidate, and strengthen as appropriate, our two maritime operations which are deployed in maritime areas of crucial strategic interest for the EU.

We will invest in closer cooperation and coordination in the **air domain** by developing, for the first time, our ability to undertake EU air support operations, including rescue and evacuation, surveillance and disaster relief tasks. We will strengthen our partnership with the European Air Transport Command to facilitate the coordinated use of military air assets in support of CSDP missions and operations.

As part of our integrated approach to external conflicts and crises, 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 CSDP Warehousing Arrangements and the mission support platform. We will increase the flexibility of civilian missions by providing teams that include experts on community policing, human resources management, counter-terrorism and border management.

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

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

We remain strongly committed to promoting the respect of and the compliance with **International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law** and the protection of civilians, including humanitarian workers, in all conflict situations, as well as to further developing the EU due diligence policy in this regard. We are also committed to strengthening our strategic approach to **women, youth, peace and security**. EU civilian and military missions and operations should actively contribute to

countering sexual and gender-based violence in conflict zones, as well as to meet the special needs of women and children and protect them in conflict and post-conflict situations. We will further promote **gender equality** and systematically mainstream the gender dimension in all civilian and military CSDP actions, focusing on the number of women in all functions, including leadership positions.

Prepare together

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

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

Readiness and **interoperability** are crucial elements of our response to threats and strategic competition. Frequent civilian and military **live exercises** on land and at sea 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.

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

We need to ensure that our armed forces are protected and mobile when they act. This calls for the digitalisation of our armed forces and investments in cutting-edge, energy efficient, technologies that guarantee our ability to operate in hostile, non-permissive environments and high intensity contexts. We will strive for the rapid and seamless movements of personnel and equipment for missions, operations and live exercises. In cooperation with NATO and other partners, we will further strengthen **military mobility** within and beyond the Union and continue to invest therein.

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 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 5000 troops, will be fully operational. To this end, we will agree on operational scenarios in 2022. Starting from 2023, regular live exercises will improve readiness and interoperability.

- By 2023, we will decide on more flexible 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.

- 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. By 2030, this ability will expand to the planning and conduct of additional non-executive missions and executive operations.

- We will strengthen **mutual support between CSDP missions and operations and European-led *ad hoc* coalitions**. By end of 2022, as a first step, we will establish operational links between EUTM Mali and Task Force Takuba as well as EUNAVFOR Atalanta and the European Maritime Awareness Mission in the Strait of Hormuz.

- By 2022, we will expand the **Coordinated Maritime Presences** concept to other areas of interest, starting with the Indo-Pacific.

- By 2023, we will agree on a military concept for **air security operations**.

- By 2023, we will be able to deploy a **civilian CSDP mission** of 200 fully equipped experts within 30 days, including in hostile environments.

Prepare

- Starting from 2023, we will organise regular **live exercises**, including naval exercises, 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 civil and military CSDP missions and operations. We will also increase the flexibility of CSDP civilian missions by providing expert teams.

- By 2023, 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.

- 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.

- By 2023, we will adopt a new **Civilian CSDP Compact** that will further strengthen civilian CSDP and enhance cooperation between relevant EU justice and home affairs agencies and CSDP missions.

3. SECURE

Our strategic competitors are testing our **resilience** with the aim to diminish our **security** and actively undermine our secure access to the high seas, in the cyber and space domains. We are increasingly confronted with threats of a hybrid nature that we need to better anticipate. The regular review of our Threat Analysis will help in this regard, but it is only one element.

Strengthening early warning, intelligence picture and our secure communications

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

A strengthened intelligence picture will also require enhanced **secure communications**. To this end, we will streamline security rules and regulations as well as bolster the common approach by the Member States and EU Institutions, bodies and agencies to the protection of information, infrastructure and communication systems. This will require investments in state-of-the-art technical equipment, infrastructure and expertise.

Hybrid threats, cyber diplomacy and foreign information manipulation and interference

We will enhance our **resilience** to counter **hybrid threats**, such as cyberattacks and foreign information manipulation and interference. Existing sectoral work strands will be brought together within a broader **EU Hybrid Toolbox**. State and non-state foreign actors are constantly refining their tactics, techniques and procedures, including the instrumentalisation of irregular migration and the use of economic coercion. Our response requires coherence and cohesion between our policies and needs to be based on an updated common understanding and assessment of these threats. The Hybrid Fusion Cell within the EU Intelligence Centre will contribute to these efforts. We need to

bolster our **societal and economic resilience** and our capacity to respond to hybrid threats by improving the rapid exchange of information as part of this broader EU Hybrid Toolbox. We will also create **EU Rapid Hybrid Response Teams** drawing on relevant sectorial expertise to support Member States and partner countries' ability to counter hybrid threats. We will ensure synergies and explore further avenues for counter-hybrid cooperation with NATO.

We must also be able to swiftly respond to cyberattacks. We will fully exploit and strengthen the **EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox**, including by imposing sanctions on external actors for malicious cyber activities against the Union and its Member States, and contribute to the EU's Joint Cyber Unit.

We will respond to foreign information manipulation and interference, in full coherence with EU internal policies, by establishing and strengthening a range of instruments to effectively address this threat and impose costs on the perpetrators of such activities. To this end, we will set in motion the development of the **EU toolbox to address and counter foreign information manipulation and interference**, including in our CSDP missions and operations. This will also include the development of our capability to trace and analyse threats. It will strengthen our response options, our resilience capacities and cooperation within the EU, via the Rapid Alert System, as well as with like-minded partners, such as NATO, the G7, civil society and private industry. We will also 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 our cyber defenders are ready to act. It will increase cooperation among the EU's and Member States' cyber defence actors and develop mechanisms for leveraging capabilities at the EU level, including in the context of CSDP missions and operations. It will also strengthen cooperation with like-minded partners in the area of cyber defence, notably NATO. A new **European Cyber Resilience Act** will also increase our common approach to cyber infrastructure and standards. We will work towards the establishment of a European infrastructure of Security Operations Centres.

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

In the **space domain**, the EU Space Programme and other space infrastructures of the Union and its Member States offer key services that substitute or complement ground infrastructures for earth observation, satellite navigation or telecommunication, when they are damaged, destroyed or non-existent. EU space systems should offer global connectivity to security and defence actors, including through an EU space-based global secure communication system.

We need to be prepared for a more competitive and contested space environment. Increasing dependency on space systems and services raises the spectre of irresponsible and hostile behaviour, space-related threats and the weaponisation of space by our strategic competitors. Our freedom of action depends on safe, secure and autonomous access to the space domain. 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 also make full use of the benefits and opportunities linked to the space domain.

We will continue to invest in **space situational awareness** to better understand and reduce space-based threats. We will strengthen dual-use innovation and invest in capability development in order to ensure the Union's autonomous access to space. We will protect space supply chains, invest in critical space technologies and support an EU strategy for space traffic management. Together with our partners, we will also work towards international norms of space traffic management. We will conduct exercises to test the resilience of our space assets, and identify necessary means to address vulnerabilities to react quickly and firmly to space-related threats in case of emergency or crisis. Further to the validation of the Galileo threat response mechanism, we will expand it to other components of the EU Space Programme.

We will further invest in our **maritime security** and presence, and thus ensure unfettered access to the high seas and respect for the international law of the sea. Provocative unlawful acts at sea, piracy, disputes on maritime areas, access denial and hybrid threats all undermine our maritime security. In order to protect our maritime interests, we will further develop the **Coordinated Maritime Presences** mechanism and reinforce our surveillance capacities, also building on the experience of our naval CSDP operations. Information sharing between civil authorities and naval intelligence bodies is crucial and we need to bolster situational awareness to protect maritime infrastructure, including in the framework of Permanent Structured Cooperation. We will also make full use of our partnership policy in the maritime domain.

Enhancing resilience to climate change, disasters and emergencies

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

strengthen our analysis capacities and early warning systems as to the specific security challenges triggered by the transition towards a decarbonised, resource-efficient and circular economy.

An integrated approach to respond to major crises is essential. The Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the crisis in Afghanistan, underscored the importance of developing an increased ability to **rescue and evacuate** our citizens when they are at risk beyond our borders. It also highlighted the important role the armed forces can play during **complex crises**. Our military actors can mobilise significant assets in support of civilian disaster response actors in areas such as logistical, medical and security support and infrastructure. Building on the EU Military Staff structures and Commission humanitarian and disaster relief mechanisms, we will improve our military assistance capability as well as effective coordination between civil and military authorities to ensure that, as a last resort, our military stand ready to assist civil authorities during future emergencies and disasters. We will also review our consular support mechanisms to improve assistance to Member States in their efforts to protect and rescue their citizens abroad, as well as to support our EU Delegations when they need to evacuate personnel. Working with the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism, we will support civilian disaster relief efforts and we need to ensure that we are able to safely evacuate our citizens from locations hit by natural and man-made disasters. We will also increase coordination with the UN and NATO in this context.

Objectives

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

Intelligence

- By 2025, the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity will review the **EU Threat Analysis** in close cooperation with national intelligence services. Such updates will be conducted on regular basis, at least every 5 years.

Hybrid threats, cyber diplomacy and foreign information manipulation and interference

- By 2022, we will develop our **EU Hybrid Toolbox** by bringing together existing and possible new instruments. This will also include the creation of EU Rapid Hybrid Response Teams to support Member States and partner countries' ability to counter hybrid threats.

- By the end of 2022, we will further strengthen the **Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox**, notably by exploring additional response measures.

- In 2022, we will create a **Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox** to strengthen our ability to respond to and impose costs on perpetrators. 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

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

- 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. To this end, we will 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.

- By 2025, we will further develop and strengthen the EU's **maritime security** awareness mechanisms such as the Common Information Sharing Environment and Maritime Surveillance (MARSUR) to advance interoperability, facilitate decision-making and support operational effectiveness.

Climate change, disasters and emergencies

- We will improve the **ability of our armed forces to support civilian authorities** in emergency situations both in the planning and conduct phases, including through 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 Situation Room to enhance our capacity to respond to complex emergencies, including evacuation and rescue operation abroad, in close cooperation with the Emergency Response Coordination Centre.

- By early 2023, in line with the **Climate Change and Defence** Roadmap, Member States will develop national strategies to prepare the armed forces for climate change. Our civilian and military CSDP missions and operations will achieve carbon neutrality and environmental sustainability as part of the European Green Deal. To that end, all missions and operations will have an environmental advisor and report on their environmental footprint by 2025.

4. INVEST

For the EU to act and protect effectively, we need to increase our defence spending and invest more in capabilities and innovative technologies, both at the EU and national levels. We must be bolder if we want to fill **critical capability gaps**, overcome fragmentation, achieve full interoperability of our forces and retain a resilient, competitive and innovative European Defence Technological and

Industrial Base. We recognise that investing more in collaborative capability development to overcome critical gaps ensures more efficiency by increasing economies of scale and greater effectiveness when acting. It also supports European innovators and manufacturers. Reducing **strategic dependencies** and enhancing our technological sovereignty is critical if we are to meet the challenges of a more dangerous world.

Strategic orientations

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

We will adapt our **defence capability planning and development processes**, notably the Capability Development Plan and the Headline Goal process. In light of this, we will review the Headline Goal process and adapt our capability planning scenarios to better reflect operational realities and should focus on providing the necessary capabilities for CSDP missions and operations. Such scenarios include military rapid deployment in a non-permissive context, as well as to respond to hybrid threats, to guarantee secure access to strategic domains at sea and in the cyber and space domains and to provide military assistance to civilian authorities. The results of the revised Headline Goal process will be an important contribution for a subsequent review of the Capability Development Plan, which encompasses future defence capability trends and technological perspectives.

We must ensure that all EU defence initiatives and capability development tools are better embedded in **national defence planning**. We will continue to ensure that the results of these processes remain coherent with that of the respective NATO capability development process. 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 the needs for civilian CSDP missions, based on scenarios. Our ability to provide equipment and services for civilian CSDP missions has improved with the introduction of the **civilian Warehouse** and the **mission support platform**. In addition to ensuring high quality and well trained staffing, we will ensure that necessary equipment can be delivered to civilian missions even more rapidly, including equipment that allows missions to operate in less permissive environments, by improving financial management flexibility.

Further developing our collaborative approach

We commit to taking forward the recommendations of the first-ever **Coordinated Annual Review on Defence** Report (2020), outlining six capability focus areas that would benefit from enhanced defence cooperation among Member States. These include a Main Battle Tank, soldier systems, a European patrol class surface ship, Anti Access Area Denial capacities and countering unmanned aerial systems, Defence in Space and Enhanced Military Mobility.

As part of our efforts to overcome these critical gaps, we commit to specifically developing the following strategic capabilities through collaborative projects, making full use of EU defence initiatives, in particular Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund:

- **Naval unmanned platforms** with a view to enhancing maritime situational awareness and force protection. We will develop advanced early warning systems, long-range unmanned platforms, advanced weapon systems, directed energy systems, Artificial Intelligence and next-generation propulsion systems. The resulting high-end naval platforms will ensure a more assertive Union presence at sea.

- Future combat **air systems** as a next-generation capability for the Union with a view to establishing and maintaining our advantage in the air. To this end, we will develop and use advanced technologies for all systems and subsystems, including Artificial Intelligence and next-generation weapons systems such as hypersonic missiles. We will progressively integrate the foreseen future combat air systems into existing fleets of combat air systems in an interoperable manner.

- New sensors and platforms for **Space** Based Earth Observation, as well as technologies for Space Situational Awareness. Our projects should be geared to networking and defending existing space assets, as well as developing next generation space assets.

- **Main Battle Tanks** as a next-generation capability for the Union. As a first step, a land capability cluster will be initiated by modernising current platforms, notably in the area of optronics, active and passive protection and integrated logistics systems. Then, we will progressively integrate the foreseen main ground combat system into existing Main Battle Tank fleets, as well as the development and integration of hybrid power trains, hypervelocity projectiles and sensors and digitalisation.

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 live up to all the binding commitments that they have undertaken. In 2025, [one third of 60] ongoing Permanent Structured Cooperation projects from the [four] first waves will deliver the expected capability. Despite these coming concrete results, our goal is to go further by implementing the agreed capability priorities and developing new ambitious capability projects. We will closely review the fulfilment of these commitments in order to be able to agree on new commitments in 2025 to further deepen defence cooperation.

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

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

Coherent and ambitious capabilities

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

In a bilateral or multilateral framework, a number of Member States have embarked on the development of key **strategic capability projects**, such as a next generation aircraft system, a Eurodrone, a new class of European naval vessel and a main ground combat system. These will make a tangible difference to European defence in the future.

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.

Innovation, disruptive technologies and reducing strategic dependencies

Emerging and disruptive technologies, such as **Artificial Intelligence**, quantum computing, advanced propulsion, bio- and nano-technology and new materials and industrial capacities are re-shaping military affairs and defence markets. We are already collectively investing in **defence innovation** by combining civil, space and defence research and developing new standards. However, we have to step up our efforts both at the national level and through a more ambitious use of EU instruments. We will ensure an ambitious implementation of the Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries. We will also establish a **Defence Innovation Hub** within the European Defence Agency 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. We have to ensure that defence can fully and rapidly benefit from civil innovation cycles and remove existing obstacles. This is essential, as our strategic competitors are rapidly investing in critical technologies and challenging our **supply chains** and access to resources and more broadly to our **European Defence Technological and Industrial Base**. As the technological landscape transforms, our new cooperative frameworks give us a chance not to repeat the fragmentation and inefficiencies of the past and pursue a European approach from the outset. We will boost research, technology development and innovation and reduce our strategic dependencies in critical technologies and

value chains, [on the basis of a Roadmap on Security and Defence Technologies proposed by the European Commission].

Investing in innovation and making better use of civilian technology in defence is key to enhancing our **technological sovereignty**, reducing strategic dependencies and preserving intellectual property in the EU. Through the Observatory on Critical Technologies we will continue to monitor and identify such strategic dependencies in the security and defence sector. Strengthening the resilience of our supply chains will be necessary for our technological and industrial base. Making full use of the Union's framework and national mechanisms for the **screening of foreign direct investment** remains critical to identify and mitigate risks to security and public order, including related to investments in the defence sector. National screening mechanisms should be in place in all Member States as early as possible. In addition, tools to counter foreign extra territorial measures and attempts at economic coercion impacting EU strategic interests and industry should be further strengthened. In the area of cybersecurity, we will swiftly operationalise the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre to develop a strong European **cyber industrial ecosystem**, support companies specialising in cybersecurity and further increase cybersecurity and cyberdefence skills at EU level.

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

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

Objectives

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

of our intellectual property.

Capability development

- By 2023, we will **revise our Headline Goal process** and bring military capability development closer to operational needs, which provides an important contribution for the subsequent review of the Capability Development Plan.

- As of 2022, **annual Defence Ministerial meetings on EU defence initiatives and capability development** will be organised and chaired by the High Representative / Vice-President of the Commission / Head of the European Defence Agency.

- 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

- By [date to be determined by Member States], we will have developed **naval unmanned platforms** with a view to enhancing maritime situational awareness and force protection.

- By [date to be determined by Member States], we will have developed **future combat air systems** as a next generation capability for the Union with a view to establishing and maintaining advantage in the air.

- By [date to be determined by Member States], we will have developed new sensors and platforms for **Space**-Based Earth Observation, as well as technologies for Space Situational Awareness.

- By [date to be determined by Member States], we will have developed **Main Battle Tanks** as a next-generation capability for the Union.

- We commit to using our EU defence initiatives to substantially fill by 2025 critical capability gaps on **strategic enablers**, in particular linked to the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity, notably strategic airlift, space communication assets, amphibious capabilities, medical assets, cyber defence capabilities and Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance capacities.

Strategic technologies and dependencies

- By 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-streams.

- As from 2022, we will 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 continue using the **EU Foreign and Direct Investment Screening**

Framework in case an investment in the EU defence sector threatens security or public order.

- As of 2022, we will boost research, technology development and innovation and reduce our **strategic dependencies** in critical technologies and value chains, [on the basis of a Roadmap on Security and Defence Technologies proposed by the European Commission].

5. PARTNER

Partners will benefit from a strong EU in security and defence. They can help us **uphold rules-based multilateralism**, set international norms and standards and contribute to peace and security around the world. We will bolster partnerships where they are **mutually beneficial** and serve EU values and interests, particularly when there is a shared commitment to an integrated approach to crises and capacity building. Indeed, 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

Building on the unprecedented progress made on strengthening cooperation with **NATO** since 2016, further steps need to be taken to develop shared answers to existing and new threats and challenges. The Joint Declarations adopted in 2016, 2018 [and most recently in 2021/2022] are the key pillars of this cooperation. In the spirit of these Joint Declarations and based on the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity, openness and transparency, we will continue our **close and mutually beneficial cooperation** in particular in crisis management operations, notably in the Western Balkans and Iraq, military capability development, exercises and military mobility. We will enhance our cooperation on emerging and disruptive technologies, climate and defence, resilience, countering hybrid threats such as foreign information manipulation, securing cyberspace and outer space and enhancing maritime security.

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 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 and deepening our partnership. This requires appropriate information sharing.

In order to uphold rules-based multilateralism, we must strengthen our converging actions and political dialogue with the **United Nations** (UN). Through our civilian and military missions and operations we are working alongside the UN in many theatres but we can do more to help reinforce, bridge, substitute or complement UN tasks and missions. To this end, the EU and UN will implement the new joint set of priorities on crisis management and peace operations for 2022-2024. We will make full use of the EU-UN Framework Agreement on Mutual Support for our respective missions and operations in the field.

If the EU and UN are to meet the challenges of the future, a more dynamic approach to **early warning and conflict prevention** is required. Structured exchange of information and joint horizon scanning and conflict analyses can help us make best use of our knowledge and expertise. This is important if we are to respond to new and emerging challenges such as climate change, terrorism, organised crime, emerging and disruptive technologies and hybrid threats, including cyberattacks and disinformation. We also recognise the gaps identified during the Covid-19 crisis. This calls for more **operational coordination** on the ground and cooperation on contingency planning and mutual support, most notably in the area of logistics, medical support and force protection.

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 G5 Sahel and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as *ad hoc* bodies or coalitions in Africa. 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.

While developing closer operational linkages with the **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe** (OSCE) in the Western Balkans and in the eastern neighbourhood, we will explore how the EU can work closer with OSCE field missions and strengthen its relationship with the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre. An emphasis will be placed on **information sharing** for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, security governance and reform and post-conflict stabilisation. Joint EU-OSCE activities such as training and exchange of best practices and lessons learned can advance our cooperation.

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

Further cooperation with other regional organisations, including the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the League of Arab States (LAS), 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 our network of military advisors and counter-terrorism experts in EU Delegations. We will further build partnerships on the basis of shared values and interests, while taking into account the intensity and specific characteristics of our existing relationships. To this end, every two years we will convene an **EU Security and Defence Partnership Forum** to bring our partners together. The Forum will allow the European Union to showcase partner support to its contributions 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 essential 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 opening of a **dedicated strategic dialogue on security and defence** between the EU and the US is an important milestone in the consolidation of the transatlantic alliance. 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, cyber defence, military mobility, countering hybrid threats including disinformation, crisis management and the relationship with strategic competitors.

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

With **Turkey**, a long-standing 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 March 2021 European Council conclusions.

We remain committed to improving the resilience of 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 capacity and resilience in the region, working alongside NATO and the OSCE is of the utmost importance. We will continue to work with partners from the Western Balkans and we welcome the regular contributions they have made to our civilian and military CSDP missions and operations.

Several **Eastern Partnership** countries are already close partners for the EU in the area of security and defence. They face an increasingly challenging security environment that affects their stability and governance. As close partners to the EU and important contributors to our CSDP missions and

operations, specific dialogues with Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova will be strengthened as required in areas such as countering hybrid threats and cybersecurity.

In the **southern neighbourhood**, global and regional challenges have increased and highlighted our mutual interdependence. We underline in particular that terrorism, violent extremism, radicalisation, cyber and hybrid threats as well as organised crime, 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.

Enhancing the security of our **African partners** remains a priority for the Union. We will use the full range of EU security and defence tools, in particular military and civilian missions and operations, peace and stabilisation programmes, assistance measures and financial support. We will deepen our political dialogue 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 capacity to deter and respond to hybrid threats such as disinformation and cyberattacks. We will seek the engagement of capable partners in Africa in our CSDP missions and operations to increase our joint efforts against instability and terrorism.

We already have constructive security and defence consultations and security cooperation with **Indo-Pacific** countries such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Vietnam and China. 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, 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, especially to ensure respect for the law of the sea and a rules-based international order.

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

A more **tailored 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 services of partners. The **European Peace Facility** will be a catalyser 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 and capacity to deter and respond to hybrid threats such as disinformation and cyberattacks.

We also encourage partners to dedicate more personnel and capabilities to our missions and operations. In 2021, we have already enhanced the modalities for participation of third States in CSDP missions and operations by ensuring a greater level of information sharing at all stages of the planning.

Objectives

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

Multilateral

- From 2022, we will further deepen our political dialogue and cooperation with **NATO**, in areas such as emerging and disruptive technologies, climate and defence, resilience and in particular countering hybrid threats, space and maritime security [based on our new Joint Declaration].

- Starting in 2022, we will implement the new joint set of priorities for **EU-UN cooperation** (2022-2024), conduct joint horizon scanning and joint conflict analysis with the UN and further enhance information exchange, including with the provision of satellite imagery through the EU Satellite Centre. We will also intensify trilateral EU-AU-UN cooperation.

- In 2022, we will hold the first biennial **Security and Defence Partnerships Forum** in Brussels bringing multilateral, regional and bilateral partners together at the invitation of the High Representative.

Regional

- As of 2022, we will deepen political dialogue and strengthen cooperation with the **African Union**, **OSCE** and **ASEAN** in areas such as conflict prevention, shared situational awareness and resilience.

Bilateral

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

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

- By 2022, we will set up new security and defence dialogues with **African partners** and we will seek to associate African countries to our security and defence efforts on the continent[, in line with the EU-AU Summit of 2022]. We will strengthen our dialogues with other partners in the **Western Balkans**, our **eastern and southern neighbourhoods**, the **Indo-Pacific** and **Latin America**.

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

- By 2023, in addition to more frequent EU port calls and patrols, we will conduct live maritime exercises with partners in the **Indo-Pacific** and invite them to connect with the Coordinated Maritime Presences in the region.

- 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.

6. CONCLUSION

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

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

The High Representative, in consultation with the Commission and the European Defence Agency, will provide an annual report on the progress made as a basis for the European Council to provide political guidance for our efforts. Based on a revised threat analysis planned in 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.