

Strategic Compass – For a more coherent, flexible and robust EU crisis management action

The European Union is facing a deteriorating geopolitical environment, which increasingly exposes and threatens its population, territory and economic interests. Strategic competitors are ramping up their ability to act, including in new areas of confrontation and increasingly in areas of critical European interest in the wider EU neighbourhood.

Therefore and thereby implementing the goals set in the EU Global Strategy and the 2016 Level of Ambition, the EU must adapt and strengthen its crisis management ability to act as a credible, reliable proactive and responsive security provider within the EU's wider neighbourhood and across the whole operational spectrum, in coordination with partners, including the UN and NATO. This non paper has the objective to feed the upcoming debate on the Strategic Compass to define our political goals and objectives, on further enhance the implementation of the 2016 Level of Ambition, to improve the operational effectiveness of EU crisis management. The Compass should thus define the EU's ambition, derived from the agreed political Level of Ambition of the EU Global Strategy.

1/ Ensuring more robust, flexible, adapted and integrated EU crisis management

First, the Compass should aim at enhancing our military CSDP missions and operations' effectiveness by ensuring:

- **our military missions and operations are able to deliver effects and results decisively on the ground through more flexible and robust mandates.** Building on EUTM Mali's 5th mandate, EU missions should seek a more comprehensive role as mentoring, advising, assisting and accompanying our partners' forces in order to better ensure and evaluate the benefits of the provided training.
- **a more coherent European action on the ground by the establishment of links between existing European *ad hoc* operations and military CSDP missions or operations, in line with respective EU mandates and objectives as well as EU decision making processes.** Such increased cooperation could include mutually sharing information as well as logistical, transport and medical capabilities, stronger European common strategic communication, exploiting, where relevant, the presence of other European forces on the ground and to ensure the follow-up of EPF-provided equipment to partners.
- **that mandates are robust and flexible enough to adapt to evolving operational dynamics.** Crisis Management Procedures, within the current planning framework, should be used in a flexible and rapid manner for the planning, launching and reviewing of military CSDP missions and operations in accordance with CSDP legal framework.
- **the flexibility and readiness of EU military tools when dealing with an urgent crisis.** EU BGs framework and capacity should be politically valued and considered as a credible operational option. **Beyond the use of article 44 of the TEU, further reflection should include the possibility for Member States to provide the key nucleus of the generated forces and the capabilities to execute command and control at theatre level as well as operational level.** This would enhance EU's responsiveness, improve operational effectiveness, hence demonstrating political will and the need of a fair sharing of the burden in operational CSDP.

2/ Further adapting to today's strategic and operational environment

Based on the lessons learnt from the Member States' past and current operational engagements, and consistent with the 2016 agreed Level of Ambition, we should consider adding one additional intermediate short-term scenario of force engagement. It should be swiftly prepared and could aim at reaching the ability to project a first entry force (for instance 5,000 strong, articulated around a

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brigade-size land component and a maritime component). At later stages, it could also be enhanced with an air component, and all necessary enablers. Such a scenario should be outlined and analysed in the Compass and should also be included as a sixth illustrative scenario in our agreed level of ambition as well as considered in a possible review of the HLG.

Beyond other aspects to be also addressed in other work strands of the Compass (resilience and capabilities), **we should also focus on securing access to the global strategic commons** in cooperation, where relevant, with like-minded partners, including NATO. We should explore ways to ensure the EU's visibility, credibility and ability to protect its interests in all common spaces, i.e. outer space, cyberspace, airspace and the maritime domain. In the latter¹, this could build on the lessons learned of the implementation of the Coordinated Maritime Presence concept in the Gulf of Guinea. As far as airspace is concerned, we should further investigate the possibility to harness the full potential of air capabilities in all CSDP missions and operations (i.e. military and civilian, such as strategic air lift and medical evacuation, air refueling, air policing/superiority), in line with the full implementation of the 2016 Level of Ambition. Hence, options to further develop synergies between the European Air Transport Command (EATC) and the Military Planning and Conduct Capacity (MPCC) should be explored as well as with CPCC if and where relevant.

Our military and civilian missions must be adequately equipped and staffed in order to become more alert and resilient in less permissive conditions, including hybrid threats, cyber-attacks and other information manipulation in their direct environment and have to develop positive and coordinated communication strategies.: The potential role of some PESCO Projects (i.e. Strategic C2 System for CSDP Missions and Operations) could be considered in that regard. Strategic communication will decisively support the implementation of our CSDP agenda and therefore should be mainstreamed through all identified priority areas.

The participation of third states in CSDP operations and missions should be further encouraged, on the premise that such participation adds to and does not replace the EU Member States' contributions and commitments, and with full respect to the EU's institutional framework and decision-making autonomy.

The security and other implications of climate change should be integrated in our planning process, without compromising the protection of troops and the operational and overall effectiveness of Member States' armed forces. Member States' armed forces should be able to act in a changed environment due to the changing conditions caused by climate change.

We urgently have to strengthen the **EU integrated approach, enabling the EU to provide its partners with comprehensive operational partnerships: based on mutual interest and ownership**. Within the agreed framework of the EPF, we should aim at ensuring that our missions and operations cover the whole range of our partners' demands (i.e. air, sea and land forces), with integrated package from training to the provision of military equipment, also with a view to better protect populations, by fully harnessing the new possibilities offered by the European Peace Facility and ensuring continuity with the African Peace Facility² in a coordinated and deconflicted manner with relevant partners, including UN and NATO, while ensuring a close control as regards sensitive equipment and remaining in line with established guidelines and best practices on security sector reform. In line with the political priorities agreed for the inception period, capacity building measures under the EPF should also complement military CSDP training missions. By filling capability gaps of partners, particularly with regard to equipment, missions will become more effective. Similarly, the new Neighborhood, Development and

¹ Further contributions dedicated to the maritime domain will be presented at later stage

² EPF will effectively ensure full continuity with the support and commitments the EU gives towards Africa and provide support to the EU neighbourhood as well as address other regions.

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International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), in particular through its *Capacity Building in support of Security and Development* (CBSD) actions, should continue supporting security and defense actions when they serve development purpose. Mission mandates must be flexible enough to accommodate the implementation of projects based on respective needs of partners.

3/ Building on the EU's comparative advantage in civilian crisis management

In view of the complex and hybrid nature of security threats Europe will likely face in the coming years, **civilian crisis management, among other tools, is more relevant than ever**. In line with the **objectives of the Civilian Compact**, we should also seek a more capable, effective, flexible and responsive civilian CSDP. The Compass could complement the ongoing efforts by Member States, EEAS and Commission services to fulfil the Compact commitments and chart the way forward beyond the Compact's full implementation (early summer 2023). In order to fully realize the potential of civilian CSDP, as well as implement EU's integrated approach, the following priorities should be considered:

- We should aim at a **strategic development of the necessary civilian capabilities**, in order to ensure that civilian CSDP missions can effectively address a wide range of security challenges and threats such as violent extremism, organized crime or security challenges related to irregular migration, increase their resilience and ability to perform their tasks in operationally more demanding situations/less permissive engagement. This long-term process would have to be thoroughly coordinated among Member States and underpinned by enhanced and better coordinated training programs and, more forward-looking, efficient and transparent recruitment processes.
- We could reflect upon a **pragmatic, needs-based approach to human resources processes**. The identification and regular updating of standard profiles that are key to fill the present and foreseeable gaps in civilian missions could be worth considering. Furthermore, an informal mapping of available Member States' capabilities (for a limited number of those specific key standard profiles) at CPCC level could be sought.
- **Swiftly implementing all key lessons identified from the COVID-19 crisis** and linking them to the Compact implementation will help to make civilian CSDP missions more reactive and resilient to future crises. This includes operationalizing modular and scalable mandates including through more mentoring activities, as well as working towards closer cooperation between military and civilian actions (investigating organizational, structural and procedural options to enhance the effectiveness of the Joint Support Coordination Cell, ; reflection on STRATEVAC and Medevac) while preserving respective chains of command, as well as more uniform administrative and financial rules and common communications and information systems.
- **We should also fully use the opportunities for enhanced cooperation between civilian CSDP and JHA actors**, by identifying and promoting pilot areas which illustrate the nexus between the internal and external security dimension and the mutual benefits of better coordination. Further discussions within the Council, as well as further operational cooperation (deployment of JHA staff in CSDP missions for instance), could be studied.

4/ Developing a more effective, proactive and better informed decision-making structure for military crisis management

In the Compass we should seek to enhance decision-making processes in the context of establishing missions and operations. Identifying faster and possibly more flexible ways to start such missions and operations would facilitate the EU taking action where and when necessary.

Enhanced action on the ground must be supported by a **strengthened command and control architecture within the EU**. The European Union Military Staff (EUMS) and MPCC should be adequately staffed, equipped and resourced, encompass the operations-doctrine-capabilities continuum and be able to handle and exchange classified information, as appropriate and building on

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collaborative projects by Member States. As a first step, the MPCC should complete its validation process to conduct a limited executive operation. Operational Headquarters (OHQ) made available by the Member States will nevertheless remain essential especially for larger operations, as long as limited human resources require subsidiarity and pragmatism. At the political level, the EUMS should be better empowered to provide necessary military expertise in support to EUMC and PSC, as well as EU institutions, which would also benefit from more frequent operational briefings and more developed exercises, with a view to gradually progress towards achieving the agreed Level of Ambition and in line with the EU's integrated approach. Furthermore, stronger EUMS must lead to better horizon scanning (early warning), more advanced (scenario based) planning, better preparedness. In combination with swift and timely political decision making this must improve EU's proactive attitude in a considerable way. All reflections on capable future EU C2 structures must also ensure interoperability with NATO structures bearing in mind the single set of forces principle. Interaction with NATO structures is and remains key.

To better inform and improve decision-making, **we should also strive to further develop the Union's situation awareness and autonomous analysis capabilities.** To do so, we must make full use of EU Intelligence tools, including SATCEN products and increase the information collection capacities of our missions, operations and delegations, including through the Intelligence fusion cell. We should likewise strive to make better use of the knowledge management tools and mechanisms available to the EU, notably by finding ways to streamline early warning and early action mechanisms into the Crisis Management procedures and in support to CSDP Missions and Operations. Improved communication and information security within the institutions and between them and the operational theatres is also of paramount importance in this regard, as described in the informal non paper circulated by France, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Greater EEAS responsibility in this regard should be sought in close coordination with other EU initiatives, such as PESCO projects. At the same time, increased cooperation with partners in the field of information and intelligence exchange should be pursued to acquire the most complete situational awareness possible.

In order to respond and mobilize the necessary resources at the request of more reactive and better informed EU decision-making process, **increased military readiness on the part of the EU and its Member States must be fostered. It will also increase the readiness of the forces of those Member States who are also members of NATO and facilitate contributions, including to the UN.** In line with its strategic review, PESCO should be able to promote operational projects aimed at contributing to the 2016 Level of Ambition and fixing force-generation deficiencies that hamper operational commitments. In this line, existing projects such as military mobility and logistics projects should be fostered as primary tools for EU military readiness. New and more ambitious projects should be launched to support and guide capacity building, crisis prevention or operational cooperation between Member States and partner forces./.