



Fourth progress report on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by NATO and EU Councils on 6 December 2016 and 5 December 2017

17 June 2019

On 6 December 2016, EU and NATO Councils endorsed in parallel processes a common set of 42 proposals for the implementation of the Joint Declaration signed on 8 July 2016 by the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, together with the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Furthermore, on 5 December 2017, the two Councils endorsed in parallel processes a common set of new proposals consisting of 32 further actions for the implementation of the Joint Declaration.

Responding to the taskings by the Ministers of both organizations, progress reports on implementation were submitted to the respective Councils in June and December 2017, as well as in June 2018. The present, fourth report covers the period June 2018-June 2019. It elaborates on further progress achieved in the implementation of the existing 74 common proposals by showcasing concrete deliverables in all areas of cooperation.

In this context, the following key elements can be highlighted:

- Political dialogue has intensified, in both formal and informal settings, with a substantial increase in the number of cross-briefings at all levels. It remains an essential tool for strengthening mutual trust, building confidence and ensuring reciprocal transparency vis-à-vis the NATO Allies and the EU Member States, as well as their strong engagement.
- Military Mobility remains a flagship, with key deliverables for the past year, the coherence achieved between the EU and NATO sets of military requirements and regular exchange on Military Mobility-related activities.
- Cooperation on countering hybrid threats continued at steady pace, building upon the achievements and keeping the momentum.
- The pilot phase of the implementation of the Parallel and Coordinated Exercises (PACE) concept has been successfully completed. This has proved to be a key element of EU-NATO cooperation in building resilience to and countering hybrid threats.
- Coherence of output between the 2018 EU Capability Development Plan, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence and respective NATO processes such as the NATO Defence Planning Process and the Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process continues to be ensured.

The key event of the past year was the signature of the second Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on 10 July 2018 in Brussels. This Declaration reiterates the key parameters on the basis of which cooperation between the two organizations should continue to evolve. The Declaration was welcomed by the July 2018 NATO Brussels Summit Declaration as well as by the November 2018 EU Council Conclusions. EU-NATO cooperation is taken forward in full compliance with all the elements contained in the second Joint Declaration. The implementation of the common set of proposals is based on regular staff-to-staff interaction in the context of a pragmatic approach and strong engagement, with the support and involvement of the EU Member States and the NATO Allies.

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Countering hybrid threats

Cooperation on countering hybrid threats continued at steady pace, building upon the achievements and keeping the momentum of the previous reporting periods.

The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki has made impressive progress with a growing membership, consensus approved work programme and a fully functioning budget. EU and NATO staffs continued active interaction with the Centre, drawing support in key areas such as training and exercising by attending various events, including seminars, workshops and conferences. Experts from the Centre have briefed EU and NATO committees on several occasions. The 2019 iteration of the NATO-EU high-level staff retreat, hosted by the Centre in June, highlights the utility of this format for staffs to update each other on their respective work strands and projects, to reflect on progress made and to explore how to take cooperation forward on key areas, including early warning and situational awareness, capability development, cyber, strategic communication and messaging, crisis response, resilience and deterrence.

Active interaction between staffs continued in the area of strategic communications to counter disinformation and related hybrid threats, by focusing on information exchange, analysis and capacity development. Exchanges have covered ongoing activities and discussed the scope for further cooperation in the East, the South and the Western Balkans. A dedicated discussion was organized on the approach to "crisis communication" including coordination of public communications approaches on to security threats.

Consultations and cooperation took place in particular during the development phase and the first steps of implementation of the EU December 2018 Action Plan against Disinformation. EU staff contributed to the development of NATO's Information Environment Assessment capability with data analyses and assessments in the context of a major NATO exercise ("Trident Juncture 18"). EU's Stratcom Task Force East continued to liaise with the Riga NATO Stratcom Center of Excellence including on research on pro-Kremlin narratives, the impact of Kremlin media channels "Russia Today" and "Sputnik" in the EU and beyond, plans for further intensified cooperation in the Eastern Partnership Countries and training materials. In parallel, regular contacts and informal information exchange are ongoing. The Task Force East "EUvsDisinfo.eu" webpage and EU social media accounts are used to raise awareness about pro-Kremlin disinformation regarding NATO.

Regular exchange of information and coordination of messages in the Western Balkans continued. Practical examples of cooperation include: (1) support and input from the Western Balkans Stratcom Task Force for a Riga Centre of Excellence workshop on the region; (2) a research project on the regional media environment and disinformation tendencies; (3) three co-hosted visitors groups from the Western Balkans with the participation of young political party leaders, government communicators, as well as journalists.

During the parallel and coordinated EU-NATO exercises conducted in November 2018 (EU HEX-ML 18 and NATO PACE 18), various aspects of staff-to-staff cooperation in the field of Strategic Communications were exercised and tested.

Regular and structured staff-to-staff exchanges between the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell and the NATO Hybrid Analysis Branch have been established and become routine practice. On the basis of the same pool of national intelligence made releasable to both EU and NATO staffs by the originator, a Parallel and Coordinated Assessment is prepared annually to ensure that they are working with a shared vision of the threat landscape. EU and NATO staffs also prepared Parallel and Coordinated Assessments, for example on countering terrorist threats, the Southern and South-Eastern neighbourhood.

Dedicated staff-to-staff exchanges and cross-participation in relevant events, such as the NATO Defence Policy and Planning Symposium, have contributed to increasing transparency and raising mutual awareness on the ways that resilience and hybrid have been addressed in the respective defence planning processes. They also enhanced the understanding of national and NATO's objectives and requirements in the ongoing NATO Defence Policy and Planning cycle and, in the mid to long term perspective, they were taken into consideration for the development of the revised EU Capability Development Priorities (agreed in June 2018).

Interaction on counter-terrorism also continued, through (1) building and fostering informal staff-level contacts between NATO, EU and Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre, (2) cross-participation in respective EU and NATO working groups, (3) staff participation in events of mutual interest including those of the global Counter-terrorism Forum, the African Union and the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Staffs are in regular contact with the Global Coalition regarding strategic communications aspects. Replicating a successful format first launched in 2018 by the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU, in May 2019, the Romanian Presidency hosted a seminar bringing together members of EU's Working Party on Terrorism (International Aspects) (COTER) and NATO's Political Committee. Participants discussed strengthening resilience to terrorism in the partner States.

In the framework of crisis response and bolstering resilience to hybrid threats, a workshop on EU-NATO cooperation in civil protection was held in February 2019. It took stock of EU and NATO requirements and methods and tested the latter against a hybrid threat scenario in a table-top exercise focusing on medical preparedness.

Staff-to-staff dialogue continued and intensified also on Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear issues. An expert level workshop on preparedness and crisis response mechanisms to support Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear resilience took place in May 2019. The discussion – based on a scenario of a biological attack against a nation

that is a member of both organizations – allowed to identify respective policies, plans and procedures to support Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear preparedness and resilience as well as the crisis response mechanisms on each side.

Cross-briefings also took place, including on EU crisis response mechanisms, NATO Counter Hybrid Support Teams, the European Medical Corps and capability development under the Civil Protection Mechanism's rescEU proposal. In addition, the NATO Euro Atlantic Disaster Response and Coordination Centre and the European Emergency Response Coordination Centre mutually informed about their procedures, systems and focus. In case of an emergency requiring EU and NATO parallel response, the European Emergency Response Coordination Centre is prepared to host a NATO liaison cell in order to facilitate closer cooperation.

Cross-participation in civil-protection exercises was ensured. NATO staff participated with observer status in the EU MODEX medical exercise in Romania in October 2018, the EU's largest medical field exercise to date. EU staff participated in a NATO Euro Atlantic Disaster Response and Coordination Centre exercise in Serbia in October 2018.

The medical community of EU and NATO enhanced their cooperation in the area of crisis response and preparedness, crosslinking civilian and military expertise in the medical related topics including invitations of EU medical experts to the Committee of the Chief of military Medical Services in NATO. Furthermore, EU and NATO staffs engaged in structured cross-briefings and exchange of information in order to evaluate potential synergies with regard to stockpiling and medical countermeasures as well as Medical Evacuation.

Operational cooperation including maritime issues

The strategic partnership between the two organizations is currently reflected in the existing cooperation and coordination between EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia and NATO's Operation Sea Guardian in the Central Mediterranean at tactical and operational levels. The two operations actively exchange information on the basis of the relevant administrative arrangement between NATO Maritime Command and Operation Sophia's Headquarters. The arrangement also covers mutual logistical support in terms of (1) onshore facilities, (2) role 2 capability afloat and (3) replenishment at sea. In the context of the United Nations arms embargo against Libya, NATO Allies agreed in principle that upon EU request, Operation Sea Guardian is authorized to support EUNAVFOR MED Sophia in its implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2236 (2016) and 2357 (2017) by accompanying suspicious vessels.

EU and NATO staffs continue exploring modalities to enhance coordination, complementarity and cooperation in the Mediterranean. On a rotational basis, the two Organisations chair the Shared Awareness and De-Confliction mechanism in the Mediterranean (SHADE MED) as the main forum for sharing information and coordination of efforts.

Building on bilateral discussions with Belgrade and Pristina regarding political, operational and technical activities necessary for the normalisation of the lower airspace over Kosovo¹, three rounds of expert talks with the participation of relevant aviation experts were held in Montenegro in 2017 and 2018. In essence, while there are no major technical obstacles to normalisation, progress is closely linked to the wider political relations. NATO and EU currently focus on different aspects and remits of the aviation normalization process in the Western Balkans, their efforts reinforce each other and will lead to a coherent and complete framework for reopening the airspace when the political circumstances allow.

Cyber security and defence

Active interaction in the field of cyber security and defence has continued between staffs with: (1) exchanges on concepts and doctrines, (2) reciprocal participation in cyber exercises, (3) informal exchanges of information on existing and planned training and education courses, and of threat indicators, (4) cross-briefings, including on the cyber aspects of crisis management, and (5) regular meetings.

In December 2018, high-level EU-NATO staff talks on cyber security and defence took place covering all areas of cooperation. In addition, several topics were identified deserving further attention, including: crisis management, exercises, education and training, and capacity building. In November 2018, cross-briefings took place on the EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox and NATO's cyber defence efforts.

On cyber crisis management, a follow-up to the June 2018 staff-to-staff workshop was conducted in April 2019. It proved a useful occasion to better familiarize staffs with procedures and mechanisms in both organizations. In addition, NATO staff was involved in EU staff efforts of developing generic standard operating procedures for Cyber Defence at headquarters level.

Exchanges have also continued on concepts and doctrines. Two workshops took place in September 2018 and April 2019 respectively. They provided a platform to establish a comprehensive overview of all mutually beneficial NATO and EU conceptual ideas and documents in the cyber domain and to explore their individual releasability as well as their potential for coordinated development.

In terms of strengthening cooperation in cyber exercises through reciprocal participation, NATO staff observed Cyber Europe 2018 and EU staff participated in Cyber Coalition 2018 and the first planning event for Cyber Coalition 2019. Moreover, the November 2018 EU and NATO Parallel and Coordinated Exercises sought to develop further the interaction between staffs and provided a valuable occasion to test existing processes and procedures.

Regarding education and training, NATO has been regularly invited to the European Security and Defence College Executive Academic Board meetings to discuss the activities of the Cyber Education, Training, Exercise and Evaluation Platform. In March 2019, the Cyber Security/ Cyber Defence Course was opened to NATO. Within the frame of cyber defence education and training, close engagement with the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 (1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

Centre of Excellence continued apace, including through participation of EU staff in the annual International Conference on Cyber Conflict 2018.

Cooperation has been launched also on cyber training modularity. The project fosters structured staff-to-staff information exchange on training development regimes, including standardization and certification taxonomy, and thereby contributes to an improved shared understanding of respective Cyber Training and Education activities. The aim is to reduce the risk of unnecessary duplication, enhances coherence and improves consistency of EU and NATO Cyber Defence Training and Education requirements and enables improved future coordination.

The Technical Arrangement on Cyber Defence between the NATO Computer Incident Response Capability (NCIRC) and the Computer Emergency Response Team for the European Union (CERT-EU) continues to be implemented in line with existing provisions. The Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP) is being leveraged to this end with the NATO Communications and Information Agency and CERT-EU having exchanged information about 41 events in total since June 2018. Coordination meetings between the staffs are held on a regular basis and exchanges on best practices for technical topics also continue. In April 2019, in view of the May European Parliament elections, the Computer Emergency Response Team for the European Union and the NATO Computer Incident Response Capability held a joint workshop, along with industry experts, to discuss counter-measures to potential threats to devices and systems related to the electoral processes.

Cross participation in events of mutual interest further enhanced awareness of respective activities, including through invitations to NATO staffs to the International Conference on Cyber Defence, the Operational Headquarters Cyber Exercise and Cyber Phalanx in June 2018.

Defence capabilities

Coherence of output between the 2018 EU Capability Development Plan (CDP), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and respective NATO processes such as the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and the Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process (PARP) continues to be ensured, where requirements overlap while recognizing the different nature of the two organizations and their respective responsibilities. Key element in that respect, contributing also to avoid increasing the reporting burden on nations that belong to both organisations, continue to be: (1) invitations by individual Allies to EU staff to attend bilateral consultations in the frame of the NATO Defence Planning Process and the Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process, and (2) invitations to NATO staff by EU Member States who are also NATO Allies or Partners to attend their Coordinated Annual Review on Defence bilaterals, whenever these take place. Furthermore, EU staff were consulted during the development of the NATO Defence Planning Capability Survey. An informal briefing on Capability Development Plan process, priorities and implementation, open to all Allies and EU Member States, was also provided.

NATO and EU staffs are also working together to ensure coherence of output of multinational efforts. To this end, quarterly expert meetings of EU and NATO staffs continue to ensure complementarity and avoidance of unnecessary duplication downstream by

coordinating multinational projects and programmes. Concrete examples in that respect include areas such as Air-to-Air Refuelling, Maritime Patrol and Situational Awareness Aircraft, Countering Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED), Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), Medical Support, Ammunition and Rotary Wing. In the same frame, representatives from the EU attended an informal meeting of the NATO Conference of National Armaments Directors on NATO-EU cooperation in April 2019 and the NATO Multinational Solutions Synchronisation Conference in May 2019. In addition, cross briefings by NATO and the European Defence Agency, to the European Defence Agency Steering Board and the Conference of National Armaments Directors respectively took place in 2018 and early 2019.

In order to implement the Military Aviation Strategy, activities are being carried forward as foreseen in both organizations. Coordination continues in the context of the Air Traffic Management Master Plan update related to the Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research (SESAR). EU staff continue to participate in the NATO-Eurocontrol Air Traffic Management Security Coordinating Group focusing on aerospace security issues, including cyber, risk and threat assessment and training. NATO staff participated in the EU Aviation Cyber Security Seminar in June 2018 and will continue to be an observer in the European Aviation Safety Agency's 'European Strategic Coordination Platform, thereby ensuring that NATO's military aviation equities are included in the European Aviation Safety Agency's Strategy for Cybersecurity in Aviation.

On airworthiness, work continues to develop guidelines, best practices and harmonized approaches for the recognition of Military Airworthiness Authorities. Cross participation of respective staffs in the European Military Airworthiness Authorities Forum and the NATO Airworthiness Advisory Group added substantial value given the shared interest in harmonized airworthiness requirements supporting the recognition process between military airworthiness authorities, including processes and templates.

Established cooperation in various capability domains continued apace. On Air-to-Air Refuelling, building on the synchronization achieved of the NATO air-to-air refuelling roadmap with respective EU work strands, cross-participation of respective staffs in the NATO Air-to-Air Refueling working group and the European Defence Agency Project Team has been proved beneficial to keep good progress on implementation. Following the first European Air-to-Air Refuelling Conference in September 2018 where NATO staff was invited, the European Defence Agency and NATO will co-host a second conference in October 2019. Planning for delivery of the first Multi-Role Tanker Transport aircraft in Spring 2020 is ongoing between NATO and EU staffs, together with the countries involved. EU and NATO staffs also continued their mutual updates on Satellite Communications activities in 2019.

In the area of standardisation, EU and NATO staffs deepened their exchanges and engagement with EU Member States and NATO Allies, on both processes and concrete projects. EU staff were invited to brief the NATO Committee for Standardisation in October 2018 and March 2019 on EU defence standardisation activities, providing for a high-level forum of exchange to further contribute to enhancing interoperability through standardisation. It is envisaged to invite NATO to the forthcoming European Defence Standardisation Group meeting. NATO and EU staffs, Member States and Allies voiced their interest in continuing and enhancing these information sharing efforts, to increase transparency and avoid costly

duplication. At project level, a concrete example of successful de-confliction through close staff-to-staff contacts is the area of Standard Architecture for Soldier Systems. EU and NATO staffs met in January 2019 to discuss ways to foster interaction and possible areas for coordination where to replicate this model in other areas (i.e. Unmanned Ground Systems, Software Defined Radios and Electronic Warfare). Furthermore, EU staff have been made aware of the current list of NATO standards relevant to Military Mobility.

Military mobility continues to be an important area of cooperation between the EU and NATO. One key deliverable has been to ensure coherence between the respective sets of military requirements underpinning the work undertaken in both organisations in this domain. The Military Requirements for Military Mobility within and beyond the EU, approved by the Council of the EU in November 2018, took into account NATO's transportation network infrastructure parameters transmitted by the Secretary General of NATO in May 2018. This has been the starting point in the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Military Mobility.

Moreover, EU and NATO staffs agreed to streamline and consolidate their exchanges in the form of a Structured Dialogue on Military Mobility launched in November 2018. Two meetings were held in February and March 2019 respectively, bringing together key stakeholders from both organizations. Issues addressed include military requirements as well as transport infrastructure and border crossing legislative and procedural issues. In this context, the NATO Standard on the transportation of dangerous goods was made public in April 2019 to support the EU's work on military mobility. The Structured Dialogue format will continue to be used to ensure coherence and mutual reinforcement of efforts to improve military mobility as well as to achieve synergies wherever possible and to avoid unnecessary duplication. Military mobility is also addressed in the context of the Director General of the International Military Staff-Director General of the EU Military Staff Conferences.

Cross briefings and participation in respective meetings contribute to enhance transparency and access to information. In that respect, NATO staff participated in the "Partners workshop on Military Mobility" organised by the EU Military Staff in February 2019, dedicated to military requirements related to transport infrastructure, building on the key findings of the draft Gap Analysis between the military and the civilian Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) requirements. In support of this work, NATO staff transmitted its updated transportation network infrastructure parameters to the EU in March 2019. Additionally, in June 2019, NATO International Military Staff and EU Military Staff are jointly organising a Logistic Table Top Exercise, intended as an informal exchange of views at staff-to-staff level on Military Mobility.

EU and NATO staffs have been regularly invited to participate in respective meetings in this field. Moreover, in 2018, EU representatives briefed NATO Allies on different occasions. NATO staff continue to be regularly invited to the European Defence Agency's meetings in the Project Team Movement and Transport and receive updates on the implementation of the specific actions related to the EU Action Plan on Military Mobility in areas such as on Cross-Border Movement Permission, Customs - including with the objective of aligning the Form 302 between EU and NATO - as well as on dangerous goods and legal aspects.

NATO and EU staffs held a second informal workshop in November 2018 to take stock of work underway in the three identified focus areas of counter-terrorism relevant defence capabilities: (1) Technical Exploitation with a focus on countering Improvised Explosive

Devices, (2) Harbour Protection and (3) countering Small Unmanned Aerial Systems. Experts presented updates on the main activities of each organization in the focus areas and identified further opportunities for complementarity also identifying elements structuring the exchange across all three areas of common interest. As a follow-up, NATO and EU staffs are to continue the informal exchanges on an annual basis and report in the frame of the annual reports of the Joint Declaration.

Defence industry and research

EU and NATO staffs continued the dialogue both on wider industry matters and concrete topics where industry is involved. Exchanges remained focused on practices regarding early involvement of industry in capability development and Positioning, Navigation and Timing mainly with a view to the research dimension. Discussions continued during the NATO-Industry Forum 2018 and the 2018 European Defence Agency Annual Conference, and will further develop on other specific industry-related topics of common interest.

EU staff briefed NATO on the European Defence Fund, the European Defence Industrial Development Programme and the Preparatory Action on Defence Research on several occasions, notably during two meetings of the Science and Technology Board and a meeting of the Conference of National Armament Directors, so as to ensure better understanding of those programmes.

Exercises

EU HEX-ML 18 (Hybrid Exercise – Multi Layer 18) took place in November 2018 in the framework of the Parallel and Coordinated Exercises (PACE) concept. This was the largest crisis management exercise ever conducted and led by the EU with the aim to improve and enhance its ability to respond to a complex crisis of a hybrid nature with an internal and an external dimension, as well as to improve cooperation with NATO in accordance with the mentioned concept.

The exercise included a hybrid scenario designed in a way to create a number of meaningful interactions with NATO staff in the area of cyber, disinformation and civil protection as well as by exchanging information at staff-to-staff level with regards to terrorist and criminal/smuggling events with the overarching objective of synchronizing the two organizations' crisis response activities.

NATO played at staff level responding to two different scenarios at the same time. The first one was the hybrid scenario of EU Hybrid Exercise – Multilayer 18 (EU HEX-ML 18). The second scenario corresponded to the parallel exercise NATO PACE 18, which was based on the same fictitious geopolitical setting of the EU exercise, as well as on a command post (computer) exercise linked to Exercise Trident Juncture 18 with a different geopolitical setting.

During the conduct phase of the exercise, a NATO Distaff cell and NATO liaison officers were hosted in the EU premises, while an EU liaison officer was deployed in NATO. In addition, three video teleconferences (one classified and two unclassified) were organized

with NATO staff with the aim of exchanging information in order to improve the situational awareness on the events in the crisis. NATO representatives also participated in the two meetings of the EU "Argus Crisis Coordination Committee" organized during the exercise. NATO staff was equally present at the Political and Security Committee meetings and the Integrated Political Crisis Response meeting. EU staff attended a meeting in NATO headquarters to identify areas where support or interaction would be required.

The evaluation of these interactions (lessons learned) is being conducted according to the established procedure and will serve as the basis for the exploration of further Parallel and Coordinated Exercises in accordance with the common set of proposals. The concept is currently under review by the respective staffs, based on the lessons identified in the 2017 and 2018 iterations.

EU staff participated in NATO's Crisis Management Exercise 2019 in May. An EU Crisis Response Cell contributed to complement the crisis scenario with generic crisis responses from the EU institutions and an antenna (six EU staff) deployed at NATO headquarters, including an EU Military Staff Liaison element to NATO International Military Staff. EU officials briefed the North Atlantic Council on EU response to the fictitious crisis.

Reciprocal educational exchanges continued between EU Military Staff and NATO International Military Staff, including through the NATO School Oberammergau and the European Security Defence College.

In terms of NATO military exercises, EU staff attended the following exercises either as participants or visitors: Trident Juncture, Trident Jaguar I and Coalition Warrior Interoperability Exercise. The latter exercise provided an opportunity to test EU and NATO communication and information systems. Furthermore, NATO had extended invitations to the EU to participate in the following exercises: Trident Jaguar II 2018, Dynamic Mercy 2018, Dynamic MongOOSE 2018, and Dynamic Master 2018.

Defence and security capacity building

Informal staff-to-staff consultations continued on a regular basis, most recently in April 2019, as a useful way to exchange views and share information regarding the current political and security situation in the three pilot countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova and Tunisia). Contacts in Brussels as well as on the ground are also taking place with regard to de-confliction of ongoing activities.

As to Bosnia and Herzegovina, talks have been held on a technical level and a mapping of potential areas of cooperation has been concluded. Furthermore, progress has been achieved in particular in the area of strategic communications. Further activities included the coordination of briefing programmes and exchange of speakers between NATO and EU staffs for visitors from Bosnia and Herzegovina to NATO and the EU, as well as a Western Balkans High Level Regional Conference on Women, Peace and Security in Sarajevo, co-hosted by NATO and EU staffs (March 2019) focusing, inter alia, on countering violent extremism and the engagement with civil society. A Youth Forum took place with a view to enhancing both meaningful youth participation and in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

As to the Republic of Moldova, staff-to-staff information exchanges both in Brussels and in Chisinau continued on a regular basis. Coordination between EU and NATO staffs took place on the respective briefing programmes and speakers' exchange for Moldovan visitors to both organizations.

Regarding Tunisia, a first cross participation in respective seminar activities in Tunis took place in early 2019. In the field of good governance, it was further agreed to organize: (1) a NATO-EU staff seminar on Building Integrity with the Members of the Tunisian parliament in 2020 after the presidential and parliamentary elections in Tunisia – subject to further advice from the field on the best timing in 2020; (2) a seminar in Tunisia to raise awareness on weak governance and the links with illicit trafficking and small arms and light weapons with the participation of EU experts.

Furthermore, EU and NATO staffs agreed to deepen dialogue notably through increased frequency of cross-briefings to the relevant NATO committees and EU working groups on capacity building of partners, and to continue to explore practical cooperation, encouraging the identification of potential projects on the ground, where possible. While the first round of cross-briefings took place at the end of May, identifying and initiating possible projects and/or activities presents more challenges, due to, among other things, the political situation in the above-mentioned partner countries, as well as the different budget cycles, financial controls, timelines and planning procedures of the two organizations.

After two and a half years of implementation, drawing upon the first lessons of the cooperation, NATO and EU staffs agreed to conclude the pilot country phase and move towards the phase of "focus countries". While keeping Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova and Tunisia as countries of focus, this new approach would foresee the possibility of broadening the cooperation to other partner countries, in line with the common set of proposals.

In parallel to this work, practical cooperation also took place for other partner countries. With regard to the Western Balkans, interaction increased significantly in preparation for and following the invitation to the Republic of North Macedonia to begin accession talks to join NATO and took the form of joint statements by the EU and NATO principals, frequent staff-to-staff meetings, coordination of messages and approaches. Frequent contacts took place on messaging to Belgrade and Pristina in the context of developments on the ground.

Regarding Ukraine, NATO and EU staffs increased their cooperation through regular contacts and cross-briefings. Under the auspices of the EU Delegation in Kyiv, the NATO Liaison Office continued to chair a donor coordination group for the defence and security sector. EU staff regularly attended the NATO-hosted task force meetings on Women, Peace and Security. NATO staff closely coordinated their advisory support to Ukraine's security and defence sector with the EU staff in Ukraine. They continued to cooperate on the implementation of the Law of National Security as well as the reform of the Security Service of Ukraine.

Regarding Jordan, EU staff supported the NATO pilot project on counter-terrorism assistance mapping in Jordan in 2018. They also take part in the United Nations-NATO project with Jordan for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear resilience.

Regarding Iraq, coordination between EU and NATO staffs in Brussels has been taking place since the early stages of planning for the respective EU and NATO Missions in order to ensure de-confliction and identify synergies. Both Missions coordinate on the ground in order to link-up on cross-ministerial and transversal issues, such as security architecture, counter-terrorism and gender mainstreaming.

EU and NATO staffs continued to consult and coordinate efforts in support of the Afghan Peace Process and the future engagement of the international community in Afghanistan.

Cooperation between the EU and the NATO maritime accredited Centres of Excellence and Training Centres is ongoing with a view to enhancing common understanding and improving responses to common maritime challenges, including in support to partners.

As to coordination of support to building the capacities of partners to counter Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats, cyber and terrorist threats, informal exchange of information between NATO and EU staffs has taken place on Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats/Countering Improvised Explosive Devices projects regarding the three pilot countries. On counter-terrorism, consultations and exchanges of information between EU and NATO staffs in Tunisia took place in 2019.

Cooperation established between the EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Centre of Excellence Initiative and the Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Centre of Excellence, Vyskov continued.

In the area of good governance in the defence and security sector, NATO and the EU signed an agreement in December 2018, whereby the EU will contribute 2 million Euros to the NATO Building Integrity Trust Fund for 2019-2022 for NATO partner countries within the EU's neighbourhood region. Cooperation also included activities for partner countries and the participation of senior EU officials in the 2019 NATO Building Integrity bi-annual conference in March 2019.

Strengthening political dialogue between EU and NATO

Political dialogue, as an essential tool for strengthening mutual trust, building confidence and ensuring reciprocal transparency vis-à-vis all NATO Allies and EU Member States alike, remains an important and indispensable element of cooperation.

At the political level, the established practice of mutual invitations to relevant ministerial meetings continued. The EU High Representative participated at the meetings of NATO Ministers of Defence in June and October 2018 and February 2019. She also attended the dinner of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs in the margins of the NATO Summit in July 2018 as well as the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in December 2018. The Secretary General of NATO attended the EU Foreign Affairs Councils (Defence) in June and November 2018 as well as the informal meeting of EU Ministers of Defence in Bucharest, Romania in January 2019. The Deputy Secretary General of NATO participated at the informal meeting of EU Ministers of Defence in August 2018 in Vienna, Austria and the EU Foreign Affairs Council (Defence) in May 2019.

With a view to bolstering mutual transparency, several high-level briefings took place. Five members of the College provided briefings in the North Atlantic Council on different topics, including the European Defence Fund, military mobility, EU defence initiatives in general, cybersecurity, hybrid threats and counter-terrorism. The NATO Deputy Secretary General, Assistant Secretaries General as well as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe briefed the Political and Security Committee on NATO's current agenda and priorities. NATO Assistant Secretaries General also briefed the European Defence Agency Steering Board on different occasions. In addition, several senior level informal meetings took place with the participation of States not members of both organizations.

A package of six North Atlantic Council - Political and Security Committee meetings has been also agreed and implemented. Five meetings (two formal and three informal) have already taken place, while the remaining informal is scheduled for July 2019.

EU and NATO representatives continued efforts to further engage with all EU Member States and NATO Allies through mutual cross-briefings. In this vein, thematic cross-briefings intensified and covered, inter alia, the following topics: maritime issues including the strategic review of Operation Atalanta, cyber issues, countering hybrid threats, military mobility, capacity building of partners on security and defence, EU and NATO missions in Iraq, Russia, Belarus and Libya. This positive trend is clearly reflected in an impressive increase of cross-briefings the number of which almost quadrupled between 2017 and 2018. This trend is maintained in 2019 as well.

EU and NATO staffs continued their dialogue on counter-terrorism in December 2018. They updated each other on key counter-terrorism policy developments, covered cooperation and capacity-building activities with partners in the South and in the Western Balkans, and exchanged views on battlefield evidence, Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear defence.

Dialogue between NATO and EU military staffs, including cross-invitations for the participation of respective Senior Military Authorities in respective Chief of Defence meetings was further enhanced. During this reporting period, NATO and EU Military Staff Directors General met in conferences in June and November 2018 as well as in May 2019. The Directors General monitored and reported to their respective Military Committees their relevant contributions to the implementation of the military related common proposals.

Cooperation on Women, Peace and Security has evolved from its initial stage to frequent contacts and a strong relationship. This has been manifested in different ways, inter alia (1) the planning of a senior leaders seminar, (2) exchange of briefers/trainers, (3) discussions on a gender analysis in Iraq, (4) two EU-NATO staff-level workshops on conflict early warning systems and Women, Peace and Security, (5) EU staff participating in the NATO workshop on sexual exploitation and abuse and (6) NATO staff contributing to both the new EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security and to the Action Plan for the implementation of it. Cooperation also takes place under the Regional Acceleration of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 platform. The Terms of Reference for this platform, aimed at enabling exchange of best practices on Women, Peace and Security among the participating organizations (United Nations, African Union, EU and NATO), are currently being finalized and due to be launched officially later this year.

As to the topic of Children and Armed conflict, NATO is currently developing an online training package for military officers to raise awareness on the military relevance of the topic through a series of scenarios. EU staff have been invited to take part in the initiative, along with the United Nations, to find synergies and discuss how the training tool could benefit NATO, the United Nations and the EU.

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The implementation of the common proposals is an on-going and long-term process. It requires sustained commitment and concerted efforts from all stakeholders, as well as continued full engagement and support by the NATO Allies and the EU Member States. EU and NATO staffs remain firmly committed to take this cooperation forward in a swift, fully coordinated and coherent way.
