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NATO – EU Relations

NATO and the European Union (EU) are essential partners who share common values, strategic interests and a majority of member nations (22). The two organisations cooperate on a wide variety of issues, including crisis management, capability development, building the capacities of partners, addressing hybrid threats, cyber defence and maritime security.

A new framework for cooperation

NATO and the EU meet regularly to discuss issues of common interest. The NATO Secretary General engages with his EU counterparts and has addressed the European Council, EU Ministerial meetings and the European Parliament on numerous occasions. Meetings also take place between ministers and ambassadors, and at staff level.

In July 2016, NATO and the EU took their relationship to a new level. In a Joint Declaration in Warsaw, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, the President of the European Council Donald Tusk, and the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker pledged to boost cooperation between the two organisations. As a follow up, in December 2016 EU and NATO ministers endorsed a package of 42 measures for the implementation of the Warsaw Joint Declaration.

These measures include:

- Measures to bolster resilience to hybrid threats, ranging from disinformation campaigns to acute crises.
- Cooperation between NATO's Operation Sea Guardian and the EUNAVFOR Operation Sophia in the Mediterranean.
- Exchange of information on cyber threats and the sharing of best practices on cyber security.
- Ensuring the coherence and complementarity of each other's defence planning processes.
- Parallel and coordinated exercises.
- Efforts to support the local capacities of partner countries in the sectors of security and defence

The NATO Secretary General and the EU High Representative regularly report to NATO Allies and EU Member States on this cooperation, and 2017 has seen substantial progress.

On cyber defence, NATO and EU cyber incident response teams are regularly exchanging policy updates and best practices. They coordinated successfully during the recent WannaCry and NotPetya attacks.

The two organisations are also putting in place concrete measures to increase their situational awareness, which will contribute to their response to hybrid threats. Both NATO and the EU benefit from and contribute to the new European Centre on Hybrid Threats in Finland.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg meets with the President of the European Council Donald Tusk and the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker on 23 May 2017.

NATO and the EU are also increasingly involved in each other's exercises. The NATO Secretary General was invited to CYBRID, an EU hybrid exercise in Estonia, while EU representatives took part in NATO's annual CMX exercise, as well as the Cyber Coalition exercise. The practice of parallel and coordinated exercises will continue.

In December 2017, NATO and EU ministers will decide how to expand this cooperation into new areas.

Cooperation in the field

NATO and the EU have long cooperated on crisis management and operations, in particular in the Western Balkans and Afghanistan.

In **Kosovo**, the NATO peacekeeping force KFOR works closely in the field with the EU's Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). And the EU's Operation EUFOR Althea in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** is commanded by the NATO Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe and located at SHAPE (NATO's *Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe)*.

In **Afghanistan**, the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission and its predecessor, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), have cooperated with the EU's Police Mission (EUPOL).

In recent years, cooperation has expanded to **maritime security** as NATO and EU naval forces have worked together in counter-piracy missions off the coast of Somalia and in response to the refugee and migrant crisis.

NATO has deployed a maritime force to the Aegean Sea to conduct reconnaissance, monitoring and surveillance of illegal crossings, supporting Turkish and Greek authorities and the EU. In the Central Mediterranean, NATO's Operation Sea Guardian continues to support EU Operation Sophia with information and logistics.

Other areas of cooperation

NATO and the EU hold regular **political consultations** on security issues in Europe and its neighbourhood. Since the start of the crisis in Ukraine, both organisations have worked to make sure that their actions complement each other, especially with regard to Russia. Consultations have also covered the Western Balkans, Libya and the Middle East.

To ensure the coherence of NATO and EU capability development efforts, the **NATO-EU Capability Group** was established in 2003. Experts from the European Defence Agency (EDA) and NATO work together in the group to address common capability shortfalls such as countering improvised explosive devices.