

## 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). In the last two years, the two organisations have developed closer cooperation, focused on concrete results and improved security for European citizens. This cooperation ranges from cyber defence and addressing hybrid threats, through maritime security to building up the capacities of partners beyond our borders.

### A new framework for cooperation

NATO and the EU regularly discuss issues of common interest. The NATO Secretary General engages with his EU counterparts and frequently addresses the European Council, EU Ministerial meetings and the European Parliament. Meetings also take place between ministers and ambassadors, and at staff level.

In July 2016, NATO and the EU took their relationship to a higher 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 include:

- Measures to bolster resilience to hybrid threats, ranging from disinformation campaigns to crises.
- Cooperation between NATO's Operation Sea Guardian and the EUNAVFOR Operation Sophia.
- 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.

In December 2017, NATO and EU ministers expanded this cooperation with new measures, including on military mobility, counter-terrorism and promoting the role of women in peace and security.

The NATO Secretary General and the EU High Representative regularly report to NATO Allies and EU Member States on this cooperation, which 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 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 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.



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.

## Next steps

Secretary General Stoltenberg, President Juncker and President Tusk will sign another joint declaration on NATO-EU cooperation in the margins of the NATO Summit in July 2018. This new document will renew the commitment of both organisations to their joint work and its priorities.

## Working together in the field

NATO and the EU have long cooperated on crisis management and operations.

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 Rule of Law Mission (EUPOL).

NATO and EU naval forces work together in response to the refugee and migrant crisis in the Mediterranean. 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 supports 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 support 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.



In the central Mediterranean, NATO's Operation Sea Guardian (pictured) supports the EU Operation Sophia.

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