

# BXL BULLETIN

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## Editorial

The velocity of the COVID-19 virus and the gravity of the resulting crisis has presented an enormous challenge for states and society more broadly. At the European level significant steps have been taken to respond, with the EU and NATO demonstrating a will to adjust, adapt and support their constituencies. More than anything, the global interwoven nature of the crisis has demonstrated the necessity of multilateral solutions, with all shoulders to the wheel. EU and NATO work in support of this multilateral effort has been steadfast and will need to be sustained.

The UNLOOPS' semi-annual *Bulletin* is an information product to update a cross-section of United Nations staff and other interested parties on UN partnership with the EU and NATO on a range of issues pertaining to peace and security. Without aiming to be exhaustive or overly detailed it provides a flavour of the partnership and recent developments in Brussels of relevance to the peace and security policy community. This issue of the UNLOOPS' semi-annual *Bulletin* provides a brief overview of steps taken by the EU and NATO to tackle the COVID-19 pan-

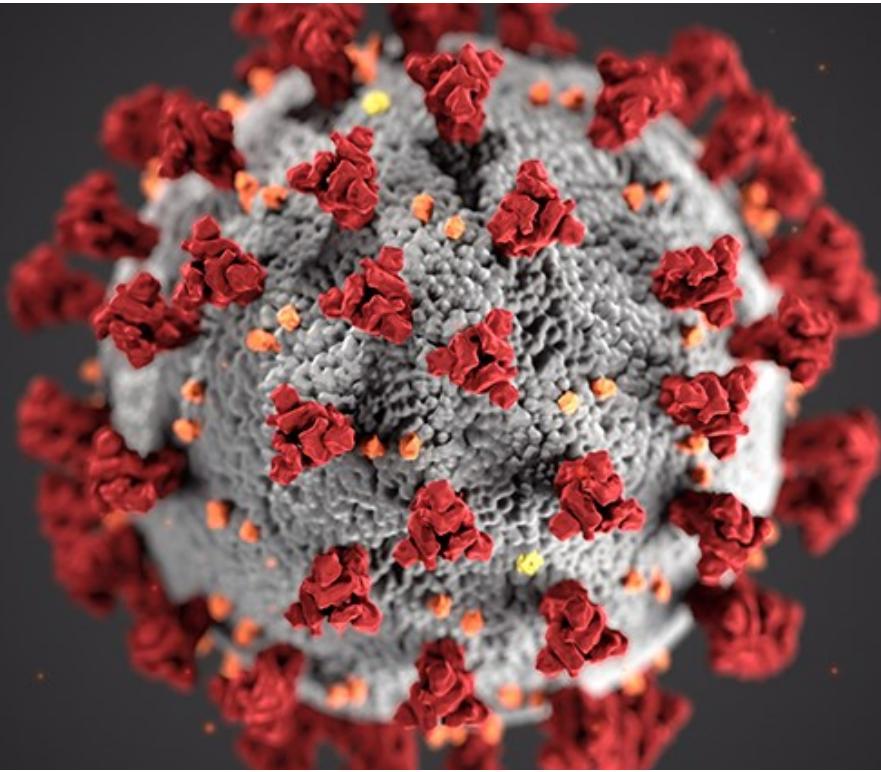
demic, with a focus on the peace and security dimension and support for the UN, which reflects the UNLOOPS mandate. The issue also covers a myriad of work areas, including updates on institutional dialogue fora, partnership on the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Central African Republic, updates on key EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions which work side by side with UN field missions and operations, and the EU-UN partnership in counter-terrorism. The Bulletin also takes a closer look at key EU policy updates and the German EU Council Presidency which commenced on 1 July. In closing, the Bulletin highlights relevant meetings and high-level UN visits to Brussels in recent months and also points to some key meetings for the partnership agenda on the horizon in the months ahead.

Happy reading,

*Rory Keane, Head of Office*

## Inside this Issue

Facing COVID-19	2	UN-EU Cooperation on Counter-Terrorism	6
Keeping and Sustaining Peace: Institutional Dialogue	3	Update: EU CSDP Missions and Operations	7
UN-EU Strategic Priorities	4	The EU Multiannual Financial Framework	8
Lessons Learning on COVID-19	4	EU Council Conclusions on Africa	9
Virtual Pre-Deployment Training	4	The German EU Council Presidency	10
UN-EU-AU Cooperation: Women, Peace and Security	5	Meetings and High Level Exchanges	11
UN Transitions Project and EU Cooperation	5	Outlook	13



Picture: EU Commission

## Facing COVID-19

### How the EU and NATO are supporting the peace and security dimension

On 11 March the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The public health crisis has direct peace and security implications and concerted steps are therefore needed to take on board the peace and security dimension, which can best be supported by buttressing the Secretary-General's Appeal for Global Ceasefire.

“NATO was created to deal with crises”, NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, told the press after the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers on 2 April. That day the alliance called for “a coordinated and comprehensive approach” to tackle COVID-19 and announced plans to work “closely with other international organizations, including the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the European Union”. Part of the NATO toolbox includes the Strategic Airlift Capacity (SAC) and the Strategic Airlift International Solution (SALIS); two programmes usually meant for processing military logistics, but now used to deliver medical equipment. Another asset in the NATO toolbox is the civilian Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), which helps to coordinate assistance to partners, including medical and financial support. Responding to calls from the UN, NATO allies assisted on several occasions, including transporting equipment for field hospitals in West Africa. To strengthen preparedness for a possible second wave of infections, NATO Defence Ministers agreed, on 17 and 18

June, to put a contingency plan in place by setting-up (1) a new operational plan, (2) a stockpile of medical equipment, and (3) a funding mechanism for quick acquisition of medical supplies. NATO allies are already stepping up to donate medical equipment to the stockpile and contribute to the financing.

On 3 April, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP), Josep Borrell, issued a declaration on behalf of the EU expressing support for the UN Secretary-General's Appeal for Global Ceasefire, which he repeated in several statements and public addresses. The EU has also followed up by tangibly supporting at country level the UN Secretary-General's call with financial support, for example, via the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). On 8 April, the EU launched the so-called “Team Europe” package to support partner countries, with an initial focus on Africa, the MENA region and the Western Balkans to tackle the health crisis and its consequences. “Team Europe” combines and builds on already existing external action resources from the EU, its member states, and financial institutions, in particular the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). On 8 June, with additional support from EU member states, the EU Council announced that the package had reached almost EUR 36 billion. ♦

# Keeping and Sustaining Peace: Institutional Dialogue

Exchanging views, learning from each other and identifying areas of cooperation is critical in a world that moves at high pace. Both the *UN-EU Steering Committee on Crisis Management* and the *UN-NATO Staff Talks* are formats to concretely explore avenues for inter-organisational cooperation at the leadership level.

## UN-EU Steering Committee on Crisis Management

The 27th semi-annual UN-EU Steering Committee on Crisis Management took place in virtual format on 26 June, co-chaired by UN Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and recently appointed EEAS Deputy Secretary-General for CSDP and Crisis Response, Charles Fries. USG Rosemary A. DiCarlo and USG Atul Khare also participated. In addition to discussing cooperation on the ground, attention was also focused on responding to COVID-19 in field missions with a focus on support for personnel, mandate delivery, preventing contagion and supporting host governments. The Steering Committee agreed to enhance UN-EU cooperation on contingency planning around COVID-19 and health emergencies and to adjust UN-EU cooperation on women, peace and security in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Steering Committee is one of a number of dialogue fora between the two organisations, which also includes an annual dialogue on conflict prevention, last held on 6 March, and region-specific dialogues also aiming to deliver on the UN-EU Strategic Partnership Priorities on Peace Operations and Crisis Management for 2019-2021 that have been endorsed on 18 September 2018 (see p. 4).

## UN-NATO Staff Talks

The UN and NATO maintain exchange through annual UN-NATO Staff Talks. The talks, originally planned for March but postponed due to COVID-19, took place in virtual format on 29 June, co-chaired by USG for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary A. DiCarlo, and by NATO Deputy Secretary General, Mircea Geoană. USG Jean-Pierre Lacroix and USG Atul Khare also participating (picture below), joined by NATO's Assistant-Secretary-General (ASG) for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Bettina Cadenbach, and Deputy ASG for Operations, Jonathan Parish. Discussions focused on a range of issues of mutual interest, including missions and operations in different geographic contexts. Regarding COVID-19, participants stressed the importance of actively engaging in the informal lessons-learned series between AU, EU, NATO, OSCE and the UN (more details on p. 4) and also stressed the need for proactive efforts to involve women in national response and mitigation measures. ♦



NATO Deputy Secretary General, Mircea Geoană (top left), Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, Atul Khare (top right), Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix (bottom left) and Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary A. DiCarlo (bottom right), discussed challenges around COVID-19 during the UN-NATO Staff Talks on 29 June 2020.

## UN-EU Strategic Partnership Priorities on Peace Operations and Crisis Management

On 18 September 2018 the UN and EU endorsed eight joint priorities to strengthen their cooperation between 2019 and 2021:

1) Women, Peace and Security	5) Support of conflict prevention and political processes
2) Cooperation between missions and operations	6) Cooperation on policing, the rule of law and SSR
3) Planning and execution of transitions	7) Support to African-led peace operations
4) Facilitate EU Member States' contributions and support to UN peace operations	8) Cooperation on training and capacity building

## Lessons Learning on COVID-19 – the field mission dimension

### How the AU, EU, NATO, OSCE and the UN are sharing good practices

The first in a series of informal, working-level exchanges on lessons learned between partners managing field missions with a peace and security mandate in a COVID-19 environment (AU, EU, NATO, OSCE, UN) took place on 25 June. The first informal virtual roundtable focused on lessons, challenges and good practices related to ensuring personnel welfare, psycho-social and medical support in field missions. A number of common challenges and areas of interest for continued exchange of lessons emerged from the discussion, including: innovative practices in welfare and psycho-social support

amidst social distancing requirements, including for national staff; personnel rotation schemes and supporting colleagues who have to remain for prolonged periods in hardship areas or those who cannot return to duty stations because of travel restrictions; executive communications; and ensuring effective HQ support and engagement with field missions. The second informal working-level exchange between the five organisation was held on 22 July and focused on the prevention of transmission of the virus and supporting host governments and communities in mission settings.

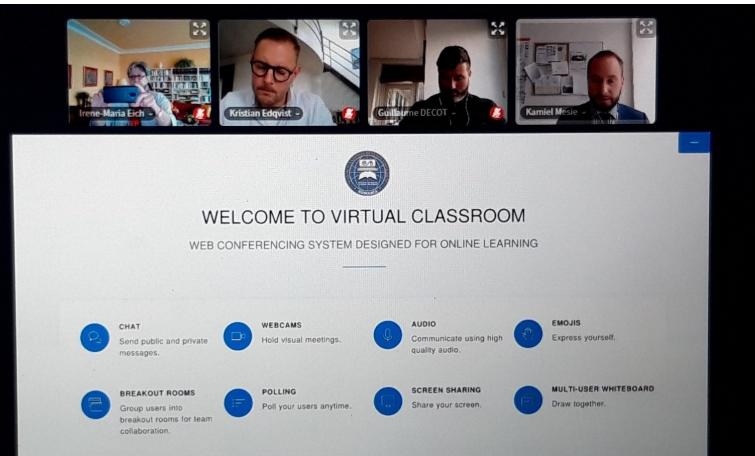
## Virtual Pre-Deployment Training

### An example of virtual cooperation on the working level in times of COVID-19

**The EU organizes regular pre-deployment trainings-for staff to be deployed to EU CSDP missions. This spring the training was delivered online for the first time, with participation by UNLOPS staff briefing on UN-EU partnership in the field.**

The EU's pre-deployment training aims at "maintenance of a common organisational standard for all personnel and

helps to develop a common organisational culture". It contains briefings to provide the latest information, instruments and policies to enable staff to contribute to the implementation of a CSDP mission mandate. In the past, training events were conducted in Brussels by the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) in partnership with national training institutions. In light of the COVID-19 crisis the training has moved online. On 11 June 2020, the first virtual course took place supported by the Romanian National College of Home Affairs (CNAI), with 33 participants (12 military representatives, 11 civilian experts and 10 police officers) from 18 EU member states deploying to 13 CSDP missions and operations. Having briefed at two physical trainings earlier this year, UNLOPS Political Affairs Officer, Mr. Kamil Mesie, provided EU colleagues with an overview of UN peace operations and special political missions, briefed on UN-EU cooperation in the field of crisis management and conflict prevention and outlined in practical terms the partnership between EU CSDP and UN field missions on the ground. ♦



# UN-EU-AU Cooperation on Women, Peace and Security

## Joint UN-EU-AU work in the Central African Republic

**Following a year of joint work, a consolidated UN-AU-EU peace process analysis on the Central African Republic (CAR) has been largely finalised.**

The analysis, coordinated by the gender units in the UN Department of Peace Operations and MINUSCA anchors on implementing the need for an integrated gender perspective to strengthen women's participation in effective implementation of the 2019 Peace Agreement in CAR. The report puts forward practical recommendations on how women's voices can be better integrated to influence the peace and reconciliation process in the

country, while also putting forward practical proposals on how international actors can play an enabling role. As a next step, plans are underway to present the recommendations to the CAR authorities and other relevant stakeholders in CAR in order to solicit views and advice on how best the recommendations can be effectively implemented. In the context of the 20th anniversary of the seminal UN Security Council Resolution 1325, it is also envisaged to launch the joint report formally later in the year. ♦



*Secretary-General António Guterres meets with women community representatives in Bangui in 2017.*

## UN Transitions Project and EU Cooperation

In May 2020, the UN Transitions Project established a presence at UNLOPS in order to take forward the UN-EU Strategic Partnerships on peace operations and crisis management in the domain of UN Transitions which is one of the 8 UN-EU partnership priorities (see above, p.4). In 2014 UNDP, DPO, and DPPA started their innovative partnership to ensure that UN transitions are well planned and managed. The project provides thought leadership and UN-wide support on UN

transitions, which are often characterised by complex political settings and marked by protracted, multi-dimensional humanitarian, development, peace and security challenges with regional spill-over effects. Through its presence in Brussels, the UN Transitions Project will promote cooperation with the EU and support the organisation of a joint workshop on transitions in late 2020.

# UN-EU Cooperation on Counter-Terrorism

## Recent updates and developments

The UN and the EU cooperate in many areas across the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Just recently the EU reiterated its commitment and interest to build and strengthen its strategic partnership with the UN.

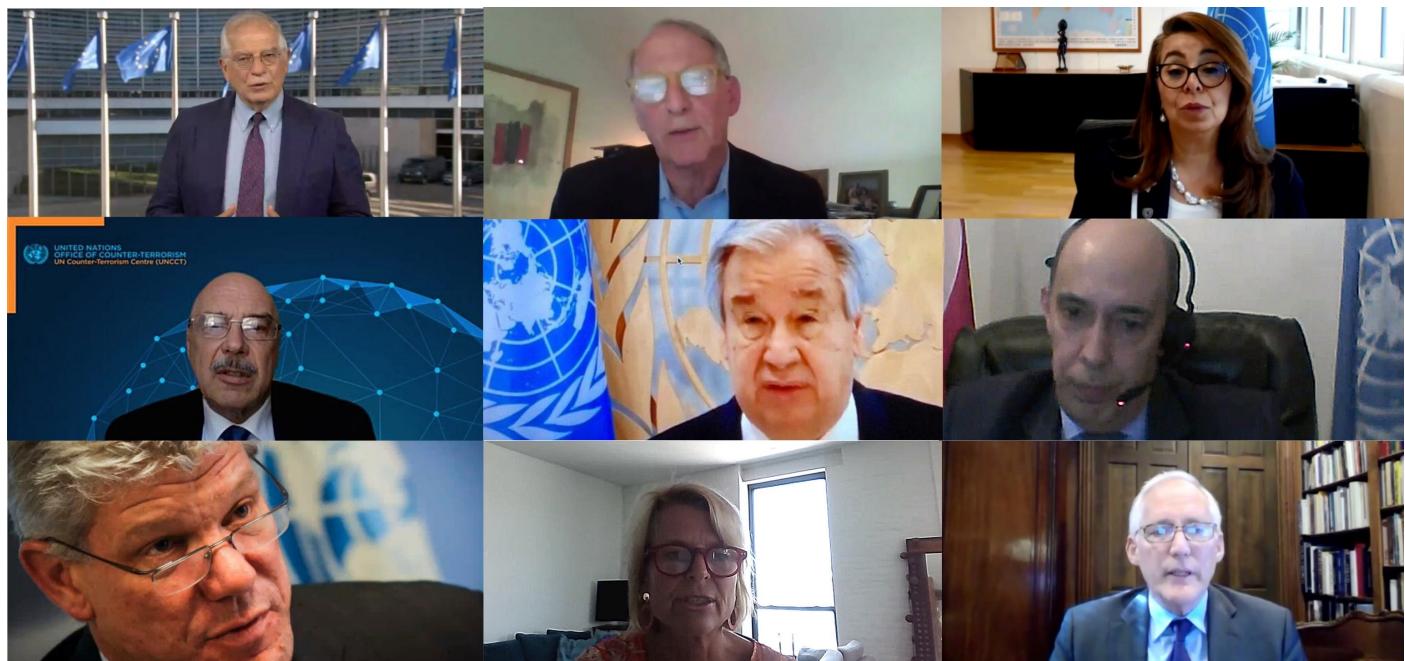
Both organisations have a “solid base for further cooperation” to fight terrorism, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP), Josep Borrell, emphasized during his opening statement to the Virtual UN Counter-Terrorism Week convened by the Secretary-General from 6 to 10 July. Throughout the week, interventions by Hilde Hardeman, Head of the Foreign Policy Instruments Service at the European Commission, and other high-level EU officials confirmed the concrete cooperation across the four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Gilles de Kerchove, the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, provided the closing remarks.

The Under-Secretary-General (USG) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov, highlighted at his briefing to the EU Council Working Party on Terrorism (COTER) under the Croatian Presidency in June that despite the pandemic, EU-funded project activities continued to be implemented on foreign terrorist fighters (API/PNR), in support of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and for the prevention of violent extremism in Asia. New EU-funded UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)

activities were also launched this year on strategic communications in South East Asia, in the context of a broader UNDP programme, as well as UN-EU partnership project in support of Sudan.

USG Voronkov’s visit to Brussels for the 3<sup>rd</sup> UN-EU Leader’s Dialogue on Counter-Terrorism in March was postponed due to COVID-19, but will take place as soon as conditions allow, ahead of the update of the UN-EU Framework on Counter-Terrorism in spring 2021. UNOCT and the EU also continued to share research and information at expert level, for example within the EU Internet Forum preparatory meetings, including on new and emerging forms of violent extremism.

In recognition of these efforts, the EU Council Conclusions, adopted on 16 June, commit “to steadfastly continue to build and strengthen its strategic partnership with the leading global actors in this field, first and foremost the United Nations”. In the conclusions, the Council “supports the UN-led projects aiming at enhancing UN Member States’ capacities to assist victims of terrorism”. They also refer to the EU readiness “to further assist priority partner countries, which are the most impacted by the ‘returnees’ phenomenon, in order to help them bring perpetrators to justice, address radicalization leading to violent extremism and terrorism in prisons, and support rehabilitation and reintegration activities, including of family members, as well as specialized services for returning children”. ♦



HR/VP Josep Borrell (top left) participated in the opening of the virtual UN Counter-Terrorism Week on 6 July.

## Update: EU CSDP Missions and Operations

There are currently seventeen EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations in Africa, Europe and the Middle East, of which eleven are civilian and six are military, with many of them working closely with UN missions and operations covered by UN Security Council mandates. This update zones in on some recent developments of interest within CSDP.

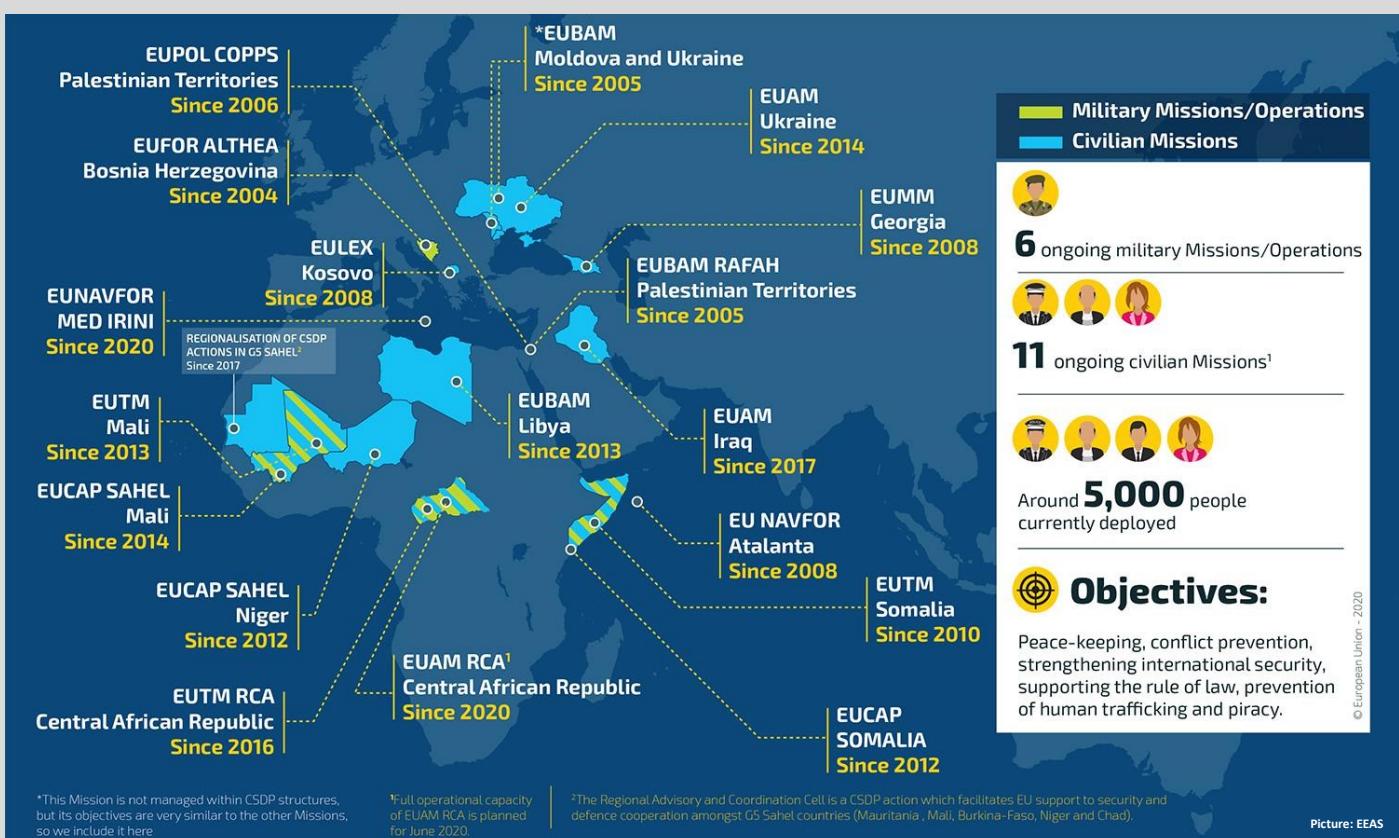
The EU launched EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, (Greek for "peace") in the south eastern Mediterranean Sea on 31 March, succeeding EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia. IRINI's core task is the implementation of the UN arms embargo in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2292 (2016). Further, IRINI aims to monitor and gather information on illicit exports of petroleum, crude oil and refined petroleum products from Libya. It also aims to contribute to capacity building and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy, as well as to help disrupting human trafficking networks through information gathering and patrolling.

On 9 December 2019 the EU established a civilian mission in the Central African Republic - the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM RCA). The mission is focused on providing advisory support to the local authorities in the area of policing in close partnership with MINUSCA and reached initial operational capability in July. The mission aims to contribute to the reform of the internal security forces and to provide advice at the strategic level to the Ministry of the Interior and the internal security forces, police and gendarmerie.

In Mali, the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) has been extended until 18 May 2024. The mission works closely with MINUSMA and contributes to improving the operational capacity of the Malian Armed Forces through the provision of military advice, training, education and mentoring through non-executive accompaniment. With the mandate renewed from 18 May 2020, its area of operation now covers the whole of Mali as well as support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force and G5 Sahel countries. The EU Council also extended the EU Advisory Mission in Iraq (EUAM Iraq), until 30 April 2022 and extended the mandates of the three civilian CSDP missions EUBAM Libya, EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS until 30 June 2021. On 11 June 2020, the mandate of the civilian executive EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), was extended by another year, until 14 June 2021.

With their mandates ending in 2020, EUTM Somalia as well as EUCLAP Somalia and EUNAVFOR Somalia - Operation Atalanta, are currently under review. Also under review are the EUCLAP Sahel Mali and the EUCLAP Sahel Niger mission.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected several CSDP missions, notably EU Training Missions (EUTMs). At the EU Foreign Affairs Council on 16 June, Defence Ministers decided to focus on CSDP redeployment and to enhance operational engagement by EUTMs, based on a step by step approach as public health conditions allow.





## Spotlight on EU Policy Updates: The EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

From 17 to 21 July, the EU Heads of State and Government held their first in-person summit in Brussels since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic to negotiate the EU's long-term budget for the period 2021-2027 (the so-called Multiannual Financial Framework – MFF) and the COVID-19 recovery fund “Next Generation EU” (NGEU). The NGEU is exclusively focused on supporting the EU and its member states to rebound from the COVID-19 generated crisis.

In the framework of NGEU, the size of the COVID-19 recovery fund stands at EUR 750 billion, including EUR 390 billion in the form of grants and EUR 360 billion in loans. According to conclusions adopted by the European Council on 21 July, the MFF will be structured around 7 headings/pillars, including “neighbourhood and the world” and “security and defence” (see below). The MFF is worth EUR 1.074 trillion in total. Combining the MFF and the NGEU the overall sum agreed by EU leaders raises to EUR 1.824 trillion. ♦

### MFF Pillars *Neighbourhood and the World* and *Security and Defence*

The MFF pillar **Security and Defence** covers internal security, crisis response and nuclear decommissioning as well as in the area of defence. Its level of commitment will not exceed EUR 13.2 billion. Financing from this heading will also include a financial contribution of EUR 7 billion for the European Defence Fund.

The heading **Neighbourhood and the World** includes among other things the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the Humanitarian Aid Instrument.

The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) will receive a total financial envelop of EUR 70.8 billion including:

- EUR 53.8 billion for geographic programmes of which at least EUR 17.2 billion are reserved for the Neighbourhood and at least EUR 26 billion for Sub-Saharan Africa;
- EUR 5.6 billion for thematic programmes;

- EUR 2.8 billion for rapid response actions;
- EUR 8.5 billion for the emerging challenges and priorities to address unforeseen circumstances, new needs or emerging challenges (crisis or migratory pressure or to promote International initiatives or priorities).

Another important instrument under the Neighbourhood and the World pillar, the Humanitarian Aid Instrument will deliver EU assistance to save and preserve lives, prevent human suffering, and safeguard populations affected by natural disasters and will receive approx. EUR 9.8 billion.

Also under this pillar, external actions will provide a financial contribution of EUR 2.4 billion for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

**Outside the MFF, the new European Peace Facility** (an off-budget instrument building on and enlarging the *African Peace Facility* and the *Athena* mechanism with a global remit) receives EUR 5 billion for the period 2021-27.

# Spotlight on EU Policy Updates: EU Council Conclusions on Africa

**The EU announced on several occasions this year its interest in a closer partnership with Africa.**

Building on a joint EU Parliament and Council Communication issued on 9 March entitled ‘towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa’, the EU Council – representing EU member states – issued conclusions on Africa, on 30 June, reiterating and outlining its aspirations for a closer partnership with Africa.

The adopted EU Council Conclusions identify nine thematic areas in which European states see priorities for the next phase of the EU partnership with Africa. Please find in the information box below a summary of the most relevant priorities for this partnership in the realm of peace and security. ♦

## Overview: European Union Council Conclusions on Africa

### Peace, security and stability

- African Peace and Security Architecture: The EU is stepping up its support to African efforts such as the African Peace and Security Architecture (AU-EU Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance).
- Root Causes of instability/conflict: The Council conclusion emphasized the EU’s support “to a human rights-based integrated approach” which addresses the root causes of instability.
- Security assistance: Assistance to African-led peace support operations will continue, according to the conclusion the EU also “remains committed to strengthening the capacity of African partners through security cooperation, including military, crisis management, training, equipment and funding, respecting national legal and constitutional obligations”.
- Additional collaboration on security: “The EU is ready to strengthen its collaboration with Africa on tackling terrorism, violent extremism, maritime crime and piracy, illicit flows of weapons and financial assets, trafficking, forced displacement, cyber-crime and disinformation”.
- Support to UN agenda: “The EU reiterates its support for the UN agendas on Women, Peace and Security, Youth, Peace and Security, and Protection of Civilians, and the safeguarding of the rights of the child in situations of armed conflicts. The EU supports the UN Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire.”

*Further areas covered are the following:*

**Democracy, good governance, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality** including “the participation of civil society and young people in building sustainable, inclusive and peaceful societies”;

**Investing in people** making also reference to the positive impact of education in “situations of fragility and conflict”;

**Migration and mobility** including tackling its root causes;

Other priorities emphasized include: **multilateralism and the rules-based international order; trade and investment; green transition; digital priorities**; and a **human dimension** to strengthen cultural exchange between people in Africa and Europe.

 European Commission

European Commission > Knowledge for policy > Africa - Council conclusions (30 June 2020)

Knowledge for policy

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## Africa - Council conclusions (30 June 2020)

The conclusions note that Joint Communication Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa constitutes an excellent basis on which to initiate a new ambitious partnership with Africa. The next EU-AU Summit will be a pivotal moment for renewing a comprehensive joint strategic approach that delivers on these aspirations.

The conclusions underline that a prosperous, peaceful and resilient Africa is an essential EU foreign policy objective, and that the EU is determined to strengthen its relationship with the African states and the...



Picture: EU Commission

## The German EU Council Presidency

### A closer look at the Presidency's priorities on peace and security matters

Under the slogan “Together for Europe’s recovery”, Germany took over the rotating six-month presidency of the Council of the European Union from Croatia on 1 July 2020 marking Chancellor Merkel’s second EU presidency, and Germany’s seventh.

Speaking at a joint press conference on 2 July Chancellor Merkel and Commission President von der Leyen reaffirmed their joint commitment to Europe and their wish to address the EU’s current and future challenges. Addressing the German Parliament on 1 July, Chancellor Merkel stated that the presidency will be mostly shaped by challenges resulting from the COVID-19 crisis.

In view of the EU’s ambition to play a leading diplomatic role in the world, the programme also aims to contribute to “a strong Europe in the world”. It recalls the EU’s “special responsibility” for the Western Balkans, the EU’s Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood as well as Africa. The presidency will remain committed to finding a solution to the conflict in Libya, overcoming the consequences of the Syria crisis and resolving the issues around the E3+3 agreement with Iran. It emphasizes its commitment to the Sahel and Ukraine as well as to work for the retention of the two-state solution in the Middle East. Germany will also ensure the EU’s continued support to Afghanistan. In the realm of counter-terrorism, Germany will

bring increased focus to the threat of right-wing violent extremism. To address long-term challenges posed, the presidency will work on external crisis prevention and response capabilities, including through CSDP.

To strengthen the EU toolbox, the programme reaffirms support for the successful implementation of the Integrated Approach to strengthen the EU’s crisis response capabilities in the long term. Moreover, it seeks to implement the Civilian CSDP Compact and strengthen civilian and military leadership and planning structures in Brussels for executive CSDP missions. Additional focus will be put on the establishment of the European Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Civilian Crisis Management in Berlin to support the development of conceptual standards and recommendations for civilian crisis operations. Partner countries of the EU are to be empowered through the European Peace Facility. The presidency will also contribute to the development of a “strategic compass” in the area of security and defense.

Germany’s unique position as holder of the rotating presidency and elected member of the Security Council may result in further support for multilateral solutions. EU Leaders and Ministers have resumed some meetings in person in Brussels from this July onwards, which should help smooth the way for the presidency. ♦

## Visits and Meetings

**The following visits, meetings and exchanges related to peace and security took place in Brussels in the first half of 2020:**

- UN ASG Miroslav Jenča visited Brussels on 21-22 January for meetings with European Commissioners Várhelyi (neighbourhood policy) and Lenarčič (crisis management), as well as with EEAS Managing Directors for Europe and Central and for the Americas. ASG Jenča briefed a group of PSC Ambassadors and also met with the NATO Assistant Secretary General (ASG) for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Bettina Cadenbach.
- Head of UNSOM, SRSG James Swan, visited Brussels on 27-28 January and briefed the Ambassadors on the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) and spoke with senior EU officials in the EEAS and the European Commission.
- On 27 January, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, USG Izumi Nakamitsu, spoke with members of the European Parliament Sub-committee on Security and Defence (SEDE) on issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. She also met with senior EEAS officials.
- On 29 January, the ASG for Africa, Bintou Keita, held a VTC with the EEAS Managing Director for Africa, Koen Vervaeke.
- On 29 January, a senior political affairs officer covering Mali and MINUSMA in the UN Secretariat briefed the EU Council Politico-Military working group (PMG) on the MINUSMA adaptation plan.
- On 18 February, Deputy SRSG (UNSMIL / SRSG Political) of UNSMIL, Stephanie Williams, briefed the European Parliament Sub-committee on Security and Defence (SEDE) via VTC on the implementation of the arms embargo during a SEDE debate on the follow-up to the Berlin Conference on Libya.
- UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) / UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) senior managers Steven Siqueira and Mauro Miedico visited Brussels on 27 and 28 February to discuss cooperation with the EU.
- The DPO Director for Policy, Evaluation and Training, David Haeri, visited Brussels on 27 and 28 February for meetings with senior officials in the EEAS and NATO. He also participated in an outreach event with Brussels-based NGOs. Meetings focused on Action for Peacekeeping commitments.
- On 4 and 5 March, the Croatian EU Council Presidency hosted the annual informal EU Defence Ministerial meeting in Zagreb. On the margins of the meeting, the MINUSMA Force Commander, Tage Dennis Gyllensporre, supported by UNLOPS, presented the MINUSMA adaptation plan to EU member state officials.



Picture: European Parliament, Benoit Bourgeois

*UN Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu (right) speaks in front of the European Parliament Sub-committee on Security and Defence (SEDE) having been invited by the SEDE Chair Nathalie Loiseau (left).*

## Visits and Meetings

- On 6 March, the UN-EU Conflict Prevention and Mediation Dialogue took place at UN Headquarters in New York. Participants exchanged updates on policy frameworks regarding conflict prevention and explored ways for future cooperation on issues such as climate security and gender and inclusive mediation support.
- ASG Volker Türk visited Brussels on 11 and 12 March for meetings with senior EEAS and European Commission officials as well as members of the PSC and the think tank community.
- On 27 April, ASG Oscar Fernandez-Taranco participated in a virtual informal EU consultations on the 2020 UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review. EU Member State representatives and experts and practitioners discussed how to further enhance the Peacebuilding Architecture and delivery on the ground.
- On 28 April, USG Rosemary A. DiCarlo briefed EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) Ambassadors on peace and security risks linked to COVID-19.
- USG Jean-Pierre Lacroix was invited by HR/VP Josep Borrell to brief EU Defence Ministers on 12 May, where USG Lacroix thanked EU member states for their written commitment to maintain troops in UN peacekeeping operations, despite the difficult COVID-19 related environment. USG Lacroix updated Ministers on steps been taken in the field to protect peacekeepers, deliver mandates and support national authorities.
- USG Atul Khare and USG Lacroix briefed the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) Ambassadors on 20 May on the response to the Covid-19 crisis in UN field missions. USG Lacroix outlined the four dimensions of the UN response to COVID-19 with examples from the field, while USG Khare addressed operational issues, such as medical and supply chain management. PSC Ambassadors welcomed the work of UN peacekeeping in response to COVID-19.
- On 8 June, a videoconference on the Central African Republic (CAR) took place between CAR President Touadéra, HR/VP Borrell, USG Lacroix, and AU Commissioner Chergui, as well as the Secretary-General of ECCAS, Ahmad Allam-Mi. They discussed the COVID-19 response, the political and security situation in CAR and the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and called upon all relevant stakeholders and civil society to work together to enhance the Peace agreement and tackle impunity.
- The UN Special Envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, participated in the fourth Brussels Conference on “Supporting the future of Syria and the Region” that took place in virtual format between 22 and 30 June, co-chaired by the EU and the UN. The international community pledged a total of 6.9 billion Euros for Syria and countries hosting Syrian refugees for 2020 and beyond.
- The 27th UN-EU Steering Committee on Crisis Management took place in virtual format on 26 June, co-chaired by USG Lacroix and recently appointed EEAS Deputy Secretary-General for CSDP and Crisis Response, Charles Fries (more details above, p.3).
- The UN-NATO Staff Talks took place in virtual format on 29 June, co-chaired by USG DiCarlo and NATO Deputy Secretary General, Mircea Geoană (more details above, p.3).
- UNOCT participated in the EU Internet Forum Senior Officials Meeting on 2 July. The EU presented its plans to address the increasing threat of various forms of violent extremism and referred to EU legislation on the removal of online terrorist content. ♦

## Outlook

### Upcoming meetings and milestones in the Brussels context

**Significant milestones for the 2nd half of the year in the peace and security domain include, among others, the following meetings and events:**

- An informal EU Foreign Affairs Council with Defence Ministers will take place in Berlin on 26 and 27 August and the informal Gymnich meeting between Foreign Ministers on 27 and 28 August.
- The European Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Civilian Crisis Management in Berlin will be officially opened by the German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Heiko Maas, on 17 September.
- EU Foreign Ministers will meet for the next Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels on 24 September.
- After the last meeting in June, meetings of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) at the level of defence ministers will resume in Brussels in October, also Foreign Ministers are expected to meet in NAC format in the second half of the year.
- An EU-Ukraine Summit is planned for 1 October in Brussels.
- An EU Foreign Affairs Council will take place in Luxembourg on 12 October.
- There will be an expert workshop on the detection and prevention of cyber-attacks on 12 and 13 October in Bonn.
- The next European Council is planned for 15 and 16 October in Luxembourg.
- An EU-AU summit is planned to take place in person in Brussels on 28-30 October aiming to deepen the relationship.
- An EU Foreign Affairs Council will take place on 19 November in Brussels.
- An EU Foreign Affairs Council with Defence Ministers is planned for 20 November in Brussels.
- An EU Foreign Affairs Council focusing on development related affairs will take place on 23 November in Brussels.
- The EU Internet Forum is planned to take place on 3 December in Brussels.
- An EU Foreign Affairs Council will take place on 7 December in Brussels.
- A European Council is planned for 10 and 11 December and will formally end the German EU Council Presidency.
- The transition period of the UK's withdrawal from the EU will end on 31 December 2020. ♦



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