REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES OF EU-NATO COOPERATION IN SECURITY AND DEFENCE

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The scale of geopolitical changes over the past decade has led major regional and global actors to re-evaluate their options, identify new ways of responding to threats and risks in the international security environment, by adapting theirs security policies and strategies, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by participating into new partnerships or other forms of institutional and military cooperation, or through the development of existing ones.

NATO-EU security and defence cooperation is part of this trend of reconfiguring the current security environment, trying to identify the best solutions that respond effectively to current and future threats, while maintaining a balance on the role of the two major organisations in achieving this goal.

The article broadly outlines the progress made by the European Union in extrapolating its role, from that centred on the economic field to that of security and defence, in the organisation's determination to become a leading security actor at regional and global level.

Keywords: EU; NATO; Permanent Structured Cooperation; military capabilities; military mobility; cybersecurity;

INTRODUCTION

Since its emergence, the concept of *security* has aroused an increased interest in its study, through the determining relationships between it and the environment in which it manifests its effects, through the different intertwining of the concept with the other twists of the environment trying to delineate and understand most of the processes and phenomena that define human society. Becoming one of the most important concepts of the science of international relations, whether it relates to an individual, a state or even the international environment, security has been, is and will continue to be a concern for researchers in the field in an attempt to discover its roots, to highlight its interdependencies and to understand its metamorphoses. All of these are necessary in order to predict its developments and identify the best solutions to preserve the safety, stability and even the existence of human society.

The end of the 20ᵗʰ century and the beginning of the 21ˢᵗ century led to the writing of a new chapter in the evolution of the international security environment, the fall of the main bastions of communism, the evolution towards multipolarity, the growing trend of expanding globalisation, as well as the emergence of new types of risks, threats and extrapolation of existing ones, requiring a rethink of the approach to the security environment, and implicitly adaptations to the security policies and strategies of prominent actors, both regionally and globally, in an attempt to create the best conditions and solutions to maintaining/expanding the spheres of influence and ensuring peace and prosperity worldwide.

Current threats rapide propagation, their increased capacity to transform and adapt to the environments in which they operate, and their effects on the interests of major security actors as a cause of theitr concrete manifestations have also led the actors to understand that no matter how powerful they are, they will not be able to face the challenges alone, thus being necessary to make a unitary front and develop forms of international cooperation.

In this respect, the cooperation of the European Union (EU)-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in the field of security and defence is one of the eloquent examples, the strategic partnership between the two international actors being reconfirmed and raised to ever-higher levels.

EU-NATO SECURITY AND DEFENCE COOPERATION COORDINATES

Over time, the concept of security has multiplied its meanings in close correlation with the characteristics of the international environment. If the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (1998) defines security as *"that state of affairs which protects from any external and internal danger a collective or any state, following specific measures that are adopted and which ensure the existence, independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the state and respect for its fundamental interests"*, the renowned theorist Barry Buzan is one of those who have contributed decisively to the extension of the scope of the meanings of the concept. In this respect, security is addressed multisectorally, along with the military sector including the economic, social, political and environmental sectors, as well as their relations. Building on this approach, today, ensuring security is more than ever dependent on the mastery of states to direct their efforts in cooperation and the conclusion of alliances and partnerships, at both regional and global level.

If NATO has been a political-military organisation focused mainly on ensuring and guaranteeing security since its inception, we cannot say the same about the EU, an organisation that at the time of its establishment had a political and purely economic profile. It therefore becomes interesting to follow how the two world-class organisations have managed to conclude and develop this partnership to the very end, as defined by the London Summit Declaration of December 2019, the document highlighting, among other things, unprecedented progress.

A key question we will try to answer is: *How did the European Union, from a political and economic integration organisation, come to expand its interests in the sphere of security and defence?* The idea of a European security and defence identity was originally formulated in the framework of the Single European Act of 1986 and was later developed within the framework of the Western European Union (WEU) Platform on European security interests and the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. However, we consider that the starting point in the development of the concept of security and defence at the EU level is considered to be the Cologne Summit of June 1999, Annex III of the European Council Declaration on strengthening the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), stating that *"the European Union will play its full role on the international stage. To this end, we intend to provide the European Union with the means and capabilities necessary to assume the specific responsibilities of a European Security and Defence Policy"* (European Council, 1999).

Within the framework of cooperation, it is NATO that has the full range of military capabilities necessary to ensure and guarantee security, and the EU has a complex range of diplomatic, economic and social institutions, thus complementing

NATO's institutional framework. In this regard, between 2000 and 2002, both the EU and NATO adopted a series of measures governing the participation of European NATO member states as well as other states in EU-led activities/missions for crisis management, EU-NATO cooperation in crisis prevention and management, and the provision of NATO's collective capabilities to the EU. The confirmation of the measures taken at NATO and EU level was provided on 16 December 2002, by issuing the EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP and signing the *"Berlin+"* agreement. The declaration stipulates the principles on the basis of which the partnership will be conducted, as follows: *"mutual consultations, dialogue, cooperation and transparency; equality and respect for decision-making autonomy and the interests of NATO and the EU; respect for the interests of the members of the two organisations; respect for the principles of the UN Charter and the development of the necessary military capabilities common to the two organisations in a coherent, transparent manner and on the principle of mutual consolidation"* (EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP, 2002).

An important step taken by the EU ocurred in December 2003 when the European Security Strategy was adopted. Thus, by carrying out a joint assessment of existing threats to the EU, principles, directions of action and strategic objectives for promoting the organisation's security interests, such as: the global threat approach, building and strengthening security in the EU's neighbourhood, and developing an international order based on effective multilateralism, were included for the first time. At the same time, the importance of partnership with NATO in the document is also stressed by stating the following: *"for Europe, the transatlantic partnership remains an irreplaceable foundation based on shared history and responsibilities. The EU and NATO must deepen their strategic partnership for better cooperation in crisis management"* (European Security Strategy, 2003).

The EU continued its evolution in the field of security and defence by setting up, on 12 July 2004, the European Defence Agency (EDA), initially its mission being *"to support EU Member States in their efforts to improve European defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to support the European Security and Defence Policy in its current form and its future updates"* (European Defence Agency). The Agency's mission has now evolved, its current effort being focused on achieving three key tasks: supporting the development of defence capabilities and military cooperation between EU Member States; boosting research, development for defence and strengthening the European defence industry; and acting as military interface in the implementation of EU policies.

After a five-year period of continuously efforts in the field of security and defence in conjunction with the international security environment's developments,

the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force on 1 December 2009, the ESDP being improved and renamed as the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Seeking to address identified dysfunctions within the various forms of cooperation between Member States, *"the purpose of the Treaty is to create more efficiency and coherence in action"* (Duțu, Bogzeanu, 2011, p. 42), thereby increasing the EU's visibility and role in the international environment. CSDP brings new elements, particularly in the field of the development of civil instruments and mechanisms for managing international crises and conflicts. In this respect, the share between civil and military operations carried out after the entry into force of the Treaty is relevant.

As a novelty, the Treaty provides for the establishment of institutions and functions aimed at optimising the flow of decision-making, the most relevant for security and defence being: the function of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRFASP) and the institution of the European External Action Service (EEAS). The Convention also establishes the legal framework for the operation of the European Defence Agency and extends the variety of EU missions, with the following added to their range: *"joint disarmament actions, humanitarian and evacuation missions, military advice and assistance missions, conflict prevention and peacekeeping missions, armed forces crisis management missions, including peace-building missions and post-conflict stabilisation operations"* (Eur-Lex).

The introduction, within the framework of Article 42 of the Treaty, of the obligation for all EU members to provide the necessary assistance and support to any state within the organisation in the event of any armed aggression is of great importance to the field of security and defence. If at NATO level the responsibility of collective defence falls under the responsibility of the organisation, at EU level this obligation is the responsibility of each member state and not of the organisation itself. Viewed from this direction, the regulation of mutual assistance is intended to increase cohesion between member states. Cooperation with NATO continues to be a fundamental coordinate of the development and security of the EU, as set out in the text of the article: *"commitments and cooperation in this area are in line with the commitments made under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which remains for the Member States of this organisation the foundation of their collective defence and the framework for its implementation"* (Ibid.).

The European Council in Brussels in December 2013 is the framework for the first debate on defence since the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon. Taking into account the analysis presented prior to the deployment of the Board by the Secretary-General of NATO, the priority actions to be carried out in this area

are identified. In this respect, the effort is oriented in three directions of action: increasing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of the CSDP; supporting capability development; strengthening and developing the European defence industry. It is underlined once again, the EU's openness to cooperate with its regional and transatlantic partners, and the need to develop these partnerships in the spirit of strengthening relations and achieving complementarity.

The expansion of the EU's security and defence interests has also required changes in the organisation's security strategy and policies. Thus, the crises facing the EU, the need to respond to threats from either the neighbourhood of the Union's borders or existing globally, led to the development and issuance, on 28 June 2016, of the European Union's Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy. According to the speech of the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, strategic thinking, a common vision and a unified mode of action at EU level are needed to limit the manifestation of threats both inside and outside the organisation. In this respect, the structure of the Global Strategy is focused on five main priorities: the security of the Union; the resilience of states and societies in the East and South of the Union; an integrated approach to conflict; regional orders based on cooperation; and global governance for the 21st century.

Through this strategy, the EU aims to identify the best ways and responses to effectively address and resolve the crises it faces, whether internal or external. Moreover, another aim is to create means and mechanisms, strengthen member states' military and civilian capabilities in order to achieve interoperability both within the EU in order to be able to act independently if needed and with NATO in order to ensure complementarity in the conduct of joint missions. In order to achieve this level of ambition, while enabling the protection of the Union and its citizens, the effort must be geared towards setting priorities in the area of capability development, strengthening cooperation and increasing cohesion between member states, adapting structures, instruments and mechanisms, and not least strengthening and developing partnerships. While there have been critical voices in relation to this bold EU strategy, saying that it could lead to competition between the two major actors in the future, I believe that the provisions contained therein reinforce the idea that NATO remains central to EU security and defence. Thus, the Security and Defence section contains an eloquent paragraph to that effect, stating the following: *"as regards collective defence, NATO remains the main framework for its achievement for most Member States. At the same time, EU-NATO cooperation relations must not prejudice the security and defence policies of non-NATO EU members. Consequently, the EU will deepen cooperation with NATO*

in complementarity, synergy and full respect for the institutional framework and decision-making autonomy of both actors" (EEAS, p. 20).

The signing of the NATO-EU Joint Declaration at the Warsaw Summit on 8-9 July 2016 takes the strategic partnership between the two organisations to another level. Recalling emerging challenges in the international security environment, the statement reiterates the need to develop partnership and increase the level of ambition. Thus, this can be achieved by: boosting actions and measures taken to counter hybrid threats; adapting structures and developing operational cooperation in areas such as the maritime environment, migration, security and cyber defence; the development of coherent, interoperable defence capabilities and participation in joint projects in this regard; increasing transatlantic cooperation in research, defence development and defence industry; improving coordination and increasing cohesion and interoperability between NATO and EU structures by participating in joint exercises, not least by building security and defence capacity and encouraging the resilience of its Eastern and Southern neighbours.

The implementation of the measures established under the Partnership is carried out through the European Defence Action Plan, presented by the European Commission in November 2016. The document identifies the common capacities needed to be developed, ways of efficient spending of funds, and supports the development of the European defence industry. Addressing different but complementary needs that arise during capacity development, the effort is focused around three basic pillars: the establishment of a European Defence Fund (EDF), the encouragement of investment in defence supply chains, and the strengthening of the Single Defence Market.

Subsequently, at the beginning of December 2016, the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence under the EU Global Strategy is approved. The document sets out the level of ambition and the following directions for the development of EU security and defence policy: effective management of external conflicts and crises, strengthening the capacities of partners and ensuring the protection of the Union and its citizens. In order to achieve the set objectives, there are identified the following steps needed to be taken: the creation of a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the creation of a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), the establishment of a European Defence Fund (EDF), the conduct of a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and the development of the EU Rapid Response Assets. They are also approved in parallel, by both the EU Council and the North Atlantic Council, 42 proposals on the implementation of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration, in the following areas: countering hybrid threats, operational

cooperation including maritime, security and cyber defence, defence capabilities, defence and research industry, exercises and development of security and defence capabilities.

The European Council of 15 December 2016 is part of the actions and measures taken during the year in the field of security and defence, reiterating once again the importance and need to strengthen this area. Thus, the significant level the EU-NATO cooperation has reached is highlighted, which is also highlighted in the joint statements of Presidents Donald Tusk, Jean Claude-Juncker and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg: *"working more closely than ever, the EU and NATO are of significant importance in ensuring the security and well-being of many millions of people"* (Taking EU-NATO Cooperation).

The year 2017 is one of measuring the full progress in implementing decisions taken in the field of security and defence, while at the same time making decisions establishing new capabilities. Thus, in the Council conclusions on security and defence in the context of the EU Global Strategy of 18 May 2017, progress in the following areas is highlighted: crisis management; improving cooperation in the field of CSDP with partner countries; capacity-building for security and defence; development of civilian crisis management capabilities and development of defence cooperation.

The need to establish a European structure for the management of military missions in the field of security and defence is also identified. To this end, on 8 June, the Council approved the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) within the EU General Staff. On the role of this capability, EU High Representative Federica Mogherini stated: *"the establishment of the MPCC is a very important operational decision for strengthening European defence. This will help to increase the effectiveness of non-executive European missions and improve the training of soldiers in partner countries, to guarantee peace and security. This is important not only for our partners, but also for the security of the European Union"* (EU Cooperation, 2017). The establishment of this capability has enabled a common picture of the EU's conduct of missions through cooperation with the existing civil structure, the Civil Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), their work being coordinated through a common support cell.

Furthermore, as a result of measuring progress, it was found that better cooperation of EU states on defence expenditure is needed, with no common vision being taken at national level. Eloquent are in this regard the press release of the European Commission of 7 June 2017 in which *"it is estimated that the absence of cooperation between Member States in the field of defence and security costs*

the Union between EUR 25 and 100 billion annually. 80% of public procurement procedures and more than 90% of research and technology activities are managed at national level. Up to 30 % of defence expenditure could be saved each year by pooling public procurement" (A European Defence Fund, 2017) and the Munich 2017 security report that outlined *"the fragmented defence approach leads to unnecessary duplication and affects the deployment capacity of defence forces. There are 178 different weapons systems in the EU, compared to 30 in the US. There are 17 different types of battle tanks in the EU and only one in the US"* (Ibid.). The launch of the European Defence Fund on 22 June 2017 is the optimal solution to resolve state cooperation in defence spending and optimise EU costs in this area.

Complementing initiatives to strengthen member states cooperation in the field of defence is achieved by the implementation of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) Process, the European Council on 19-20 October 2017 marking the launch of the its test. Its role is to achieve a holistic picture at Union level on defence expenditure, member states investments and research-specific expenditure, thus being able to identify deficits and draw new directions of action to complement them, visible transparency and closer cooperation between member states on security and defence security, and effective defence expenditure planning.

Cooperation continued, with 32 new proposals for concrete actions in the early December 2017 process being approved during a parallel process at EU and NATO level concerning: counterterrorism, peace and security and military mobility.

An important step towards achieving the security and defence issue is the creation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation which is, in fact, a plan for closer cooperation in the field of defence, signed on 11 December 2017 by 25 countries within the European Union. The main aim of PESCO, which MEP Michael Gahler said to be the *"the central institution to ensure that the current isolated strands of military cooperation are put together under one roof"* (European Parliament), is to achieve close cooperation in the field of defence by combining resources and jointly developing combat and armaments, reducing the gap in the provision of technology and armaments between member states and achieving interoperability between the armed forces of members representing secondary objectives. An initial number of 17 projects were agreed in areas such as training, capability development and operational readiness in the field of defence, as follows: the creation of a European Medical Command; the development of secure and common technologies for European military radio equipment; the creation of a network of hubs for coordination and logistics supply throughout the EU; creating a concept of military mobility within the Union; the establishment of a Training

Centre for the European Mission; the establishment of a Certification Centre for the armies of EU Member States; developing operational energy sources that can be used in camps; the establishment of a capability of military specialists that can be used in a short time to limit the consequences of natural disasters, pandemics and calamities; the development of autonomous systems capable of operating underwater, land or air as countermeasures for maritime mines; the establishment of a maritime capability to ensure better supervision and protection in the maritime environment; development of existing maritime surveillance systems; creating a platform for managing Cyber incidents; creating Cyber Incident Rapid Response Teams; establishing a Strategic Command and Control System for CSDP missions; developing a prototype for a European combat vehicle, such as a multirole platform; the development of a European mobile artillery platform and the creation of an Operational Crisis Response Command (EU Council, 2019).

The implementation of the measures is made transparent at the level of the two organisations, measuring in real time the results achieved and the need to develop new directions. In this regard, the European Council of 28-29 June 2018 highlights the significant progress made in the field of security and defence cooperation, stressing the need for further projects under PESCO and NATO-EU cooperation. It also identifies the need to speed up the implementation of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme, as well as to make further progress on the implementation of the European Defence Fund, the need to adopt new restrictive measures on the use and proliferation of chemical weapons, and the need to strengthen capabilities to combat cyber threats from outside the EU. Furthermore, the conclusions of the Council *"call for further deepening of EU-NATO cooperation, in full respect of the principles of EU inclusion, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy, including through a new joint declaration, building on the progress made in the implementation of the 2016 Joint Declaration and related action proposals"* (Ibid.).

The high level reached by EU-NATO cooperation was reaffirmed two days before the NATO Summit in Brussels, President Donald Tusk, President Jean-Claude Juncker and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg signing a new EU-NATO Joint Declaration on 10 July 2018, eloquent in this regard being its first paragraph: *"Two years ago in Warsaw, we came together to strengthen EU-NATO cooperation aiming to promote peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. Our respective efforts are mutually reinforcing, have improved the security of our citizens and strengthened our trans-Atlantic bond. Our longstanding cooperation has developed substantially, and is now unprecedented in its quality, scope and vigour. We share the same values*

and resolve to address, hand-in-hand, the common challenges we face. As our security is interconnected, we meet today in Brussels to reaffirm the importance of and the need for cooperation, and underline that our security and defence initiatives benefit each other". The document sets out a common vision of how the EU and NATO will work together to deepen partnership and counter common security threats and sets out the following areas on which the cooperation effort will continue to be focused: military mobility, cybersecurity, hybrid threats, counter-terrorism, women, peace and security.

The EU's progress in security and defence continues with the adoption, on 19 October 2018, of an updated list of projects to be developed under PESCO, with the number increasing from the 17 projects on 6 March 2018 to 34 projects. These include: training helicopter crews to operate in *"Hot and High"* environments; the establishment of a Joint Information School; the creation of Testing and Evaluation Centres; the development of non-human, multirole, threat-resistant terrestrial, multirole-resistant systems, which constitute the platform for transport, ISR, UAV capabilities, and other types of sensors; the creation of a European medium-range missile system; the development of a modular combat asset capable of performing the full spectrum of underwater defensive operations; the construction of a Eurodrone; modernisation of the European TIGER Mark III attack helicopter; developing a system of modular systems with dedicated command and control capabilities to combat the mini and micro UAV threat; development of ISR capabilities mounted on balloon platforms; the creation of a deployable command post for special forces operations to conduct low-intensity operations; creating a CBRN Surveillance Service with sensors to enable CBRN Recognised Picture; creating the concept of colocation in bases during operations; the development of a geo-meteorological and oceanographic coordination element; developing a network to monitor the alien space and warn against natural or other threats that may be generated by the human race and others (EU Council, 2019).

For unitary development, in parallel with the measures taken in the military sphere of security and defence, civil CSDP consolidation is also taking place, with the Civil CSDP Pact approved in December 2018. With this pact, the EU is strengthening the civilian crisis management capacity by: *"strengthening the police, the rule of law and civil administration in fragile and conflict contexts"* (Ibid.).

One year after the implementation of PESCO, on 14 May 2019, the EU Council assesses the progress made. Increased defence budgets and joint investment in this area, the increasing use of EU instruments, means and mechanisms for national defence planning are the most significant positive findings. At the same time,

member states are encouraged to participate actively in cooperative capability development initiatives and to develop their capacity and deployment capacity. Measures need to also be taken to quickly and effectively implement PESCO projects, the vast majority of which being priorities of both the EU and NATO.

On 12 October 2019, 13 new projects are launched within PESCO (creation of an Integrated Training and Simulation Centre; creation of a European Cyber Academy, creation of a Medical Training Centre for special operations forces; construction of a CBRN Defence Range; creation of Divers Training Centres; construction of remotely piloted anti-submarine systems; creation of a prototype European corvette vessel; creation of jamming assets for airborne operations; creation of a Cyber Coordination Centre; the creation of air warning and interception systems; creating a modelling and simulation architecture to analyse how remotely piloted aerial systems are integrated into airspace) (Ibid.), total PESCO projects amounting to 47. Two months later, based on assessing progress in combating threats and minimising hybrid risks, the Council sets out the directions to be taken for the EU and the necessary guidance for further cooperation in this area.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the issues are presented succinctly, aware that in order to understand the whole phenomenon of EU-NATO cooperation, an in-depth analysis is needed, the results of which cannot be contained in a few pages, the full EU's dedication to the implementation of the joint actions established in cooperation with NATO and in the development of PESCO projects, in conjunction with the adaptation of its organisational and functional structure, reveals a much more active Union, eager to polish all its sides in order to take its well-deserved place in this security and defence puzzle, not only at regional level, but even globally.

Started more than 15 years ago, through the multitude of areas and projects jointly addressed, perseverance in respecting the principles and ideas promoted from the time of genesis to the present, success achieved in maintaining security and stability at regional level and even at global level, the EU-NATO partnership represents the most important and successfull form of cooperation of the beginning of the 21st century, in the form and extent that is expected to reach it in the future, probably for the entire century.

Since the beginning of cooperation, political dialogue between the EU and NATO has increased to a remarkable level in terms of consistency, transparency and clarity. High-level representatives from the two major organisations attend each other's most important meetings, which is confirmed by the consistency in the declarations

issued in recent times. Staff and structures with the same specificity are jointly and increasingly working through the exchange of information and experience, cross-participation in working groups to find optimal solutions in all areas subject to cooperation. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the EU and NATO have closely coordinated their respective efforts in overlapping areas of competence both at political and functional levels.

The joint capacity to act in the field of countering hybrid threats has increased through participation in joint exercises, conducting seminars and working groups on various topics on types of hybrid threats in the organising-participant system and subsequent change of roles within organisations, permanent horizontal exchange of information between staff, exchange of information process products, development of the warning system along the line of execution of hostile information activities, disinformation and others. In this respect, the eloquent is the cooperation between the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell, NATO's Hybrid Analysis Structure and the Helsinki Centre of Excellence, between the European External Action Service and NATO's Public Diplomacy Division, as well as between the Eastern Strategic Communication Centre of the European External Action Service and NATO's Centre of Excellence in Strategic Communication.

Progress has been made in the operational cooperation inclusive in the maritime field, too, through the ongoing exchange of information and participation in joint briefings at headquarters level, as well as through operational and tactical cooperation between the two organisations during operations in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. The EU and NATO continue to lead the Common Mediterranean Warning and De-conflict Mechanism (SHADE MED) as the main forum for improving situational awareness and the exchange of experience in order to improve de-conflict and coordinate efforts. Relevant for this area is also the joint participation in operations such as EUNAVFOR MED SOPHIA, SEA GUARDIAN and EUNAVFOR MED IRINI.

Cooperation in the field of cyber security and defence has been extended and improved by: informal exchanges of information on courses and forms of training in the field; mutual participation in cyber exercises; carrying out mutual exchange of information on specific concepts and doctrines; participation in joint briefings and workshops.

In terms of defence capabilities, efforts continue to ensure consistency of results between the 2018 EU Capability Development Plan (CDP), the Annual Coordinated Defence Review (CARD) and respective NATO processes, such as the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and the Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process

(PARP). Consistency was further pursued in the implementation of projects under PESCO, with 38 of the 47 current projects also broadly addressing NATO's priorities. In addition, contacts at all levels have helped to ensure mutual awareness of ongoing activities within each organisation. Progress has been made in the implementation of the Military Aviation Strategy, cooperation within the NATO-EUROCONTROL Air Traffic Security Management Coordination Group and cooperation in the field of military mobility.

The development of cooperation in the field of defence industry and research has mainly improved through the exchange of information and experience between staff and structures with specific responsibilities within the two organisations in the field of: defence industry, standardisation, energy, CBRN, maritime research and not least artificial intelligence. Progress has been made in cooperation between the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the NATO Innovation Centre of the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) and NATO's Science and Technology Organisation (STO), with STO participating in maritime research projects.

Through joint participation in the exercises and the implementation of the lessons identified during their deployment, the framework was created to increase procedural and action altogether between the structures within the two major organisations. The exchange of experience was also achieved through mutual participation in symposiums on various topics, as well as through the involvement of staff during the planning of the exercises. Edifying in this regard are the participation of EU staff in NATO exercises such as CRISIS MANAGEMENT EXERCISE 2019 (CMX19), Coalition Warrior Interoperability Exercise 2019 (CWIX19), TRIDENT JUPITER 2019 and TRIDENT JACKAL 2019 and the participation of NATO staff at the EU DARK BLADE 2019, MILEX 19, EU CHEM REACT and the EDA Helicopter Tactics Symposium.

Open dialogue and transparency of actions have facilitated actions that have led to de-conflictisation and coordination of efforts in the following main areas: good governance, strategic communication, CBRN, counter-terrorism, women, peace and security.

To conclude, the future of EU-NATO cooperation will continue to focus on dialogue, transparency and full involvement in both directions, in complementarity, synergy and full respect for the institutional framework and decision-making autonomy of both actors, aiming at meeting the full set of joint actions set out in the agreements concluded, as also presented in the text of the report: *"While the implementation of the 74 common proposals is based on regular, close and pragmatic staff-to-staff engagement, continued full engagement and support*

by the NATO Allies and the EU Member States remains crucial. In this context and in light of known and new challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever that the EU and NATO continue to consolidate and further strengthen their close and mutually reinforcing cooperation and strategic partnership for the benefit of the Euro-Atlantic security and their members" (EU Council, 2020).

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