

NATO – EU Relations

NATO and the European Union (EU) are essential partners who share common values, strategic interests and a majority of member nations. 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 addresses the European Council, EU Ministerial meetings and the European Parliament several times a year. Meetings also take place between ministers, ambassadors and military leaders, as well as at the staff level.

NATO and the EU took their relationship to a higher level in July 2016. 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. This commitment was renewed with another joint declaration on NATO-EU cooperation, signed in the margins of the NATO Summit in July 2018.

Currently, NATO and the EU are cooperating on more than seventy measures, endorsed by NATO and EU ministers.

These include:

- Measures to bolster resilience to hybrid threats, ranging from disinformation campaigns to crises.
- Cooperation between NATO's Operation Sea Guardian and EUNAVFOR Operation Sophia.
- Cooperation on military mobility in order to ensure that NATO forces can cross borders faster and more easily, when needed.
- Cooperation to ensure that our capability development efforts are coherent and mutually reinforcing.
- Exchange of information on cyber threats and the sharing of best practices on cyber security.
- Parallel and coordinated exercises.
- Efforts to support the local capacities of partner countries in the sectors of security and defence.
- 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.

At the 2018 Brussels Summit, Allied leaders welcomed the new joint declaration and the tangible results of NATO-EU cooperation. They recognised that the development of coherent, complementary and interoperable defence capabilities is key to the joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer. Such efforts will strengthen NATO, help enhance common security, contribute to transatlantic burden sharing, help deliver needed capabilities, and support an overall increase in defence spending.

Results and way forward

NATO and the EU are working together to promote good governance in the defence and security sector of partner countries. In December 2018, the European Commission agreed to contribute 2 million EUR to the NATO Building Integrity Trust Fund for 2019-2022.

NATO works closely with the European Defence Agency (EDA) and five Allies on the procurement of a European multinational fleet of multirole tanker–transport (MRTT) aircraft. The fleet consists of eight aircraft which are scheduled for delivery between 2020 and 2024. The planes can be configured for air-to-air refuelling, the transport of passengers and cargo, as well as medical evacuation. This project will substantially increase European capacity in air-to-air refuelling. It is an example of effective cooperation between NATO and the EU in the delivery of critical capabilities.



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.

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.

On military mobility, NATO staff has contributed to the EU's work on the military infrastructure requirements. Against that background, the Secretary General shared with the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission NATO's generic transport infrastructure parameters. Continued close cooperation will help to ensure synergies in this area.

The two organisations are 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. In late 2018, they conducted parallel crisis management exercises with related scenarios. Furthermore, the NATO Secretary General attended CYBRID, an EU hybrid exercise in Estonia, while EU representatives took part in NATO's annual exercises such as CMX and Cyber Coalition. Parallel and coordinated exercises help NATO and the EU to improve their knowledge of each other's working methods and are improving their ability to coordinate.



Navy officers from NATO Operation Sea Guardian and the EU Operation Sophia work together regularly in the Mediterranean Sea.

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).

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's training and capacity-building in **Iraq**, implemented through the NATO Mission Iraq, is undertaken in close cooperation with the EU's stabilisation support in the country, ensuring complementarity of effort.

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.

The EU's Operation EUFOR Althea in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** has long been commanded by the NATO Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe and located at SHAPE (NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe).

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.

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