

## EUROMIL Wednesday Q&A series

Did the Strategic [Com]pass muster?



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### **What has been for you the biggest success of the Compass so far?**

Several factors indicate the possible success of the Strategic Compass, which was published only a year ago. Compared to earlier EU security strategies (2003, 2008, and 2016), the Compass places greater emphasis on bolstering the EU's resilience against hybrid threats. This shift reflects the evolving strategic environment, including the blurring between war and peacetime, where state and non-state actors employ various tactics to exploit vulnerabilities and undermine the EU's security, society, borders' integrity, and critical infrastructure. In this context, it is encouraging that the EU is adopting a comprehensive approach to confront these threats, guided by the Strategic Compass. This involves specific planning, actions, and development of resilient and advanced capabilities and technologies.

To address these multifaceted challenges, the European Defence Agency (EDA) is collaborating with the European Commission and the ministries of defence. EDA is preparing a research study on enhancing the resilience of defence-related critical energy infrastructure against hybrid threats to foster civil-military collaboration and raise awareness. Furthermore, a table-top exercise on hybrid threats, set to take place in May 2023 under the auspices of the Bulgarian Ministry of Defence, will promote collaboration across Europe in response to these threats. The exercise will use a multidimensional threat scenario to enhance situational awareness and decision-making by exploring response strategies, prevention methods, and management techniques. These initiatives demonstrate the EU's commitment to an integrated and coordinated approach to addressing hybrid threats and enhancing its security and defence energy resilience.

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**According to the Strategic Compass, by the end of the year, the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap will be fully implemented; what does this truly mean for the Armed Forces and how does the European Defence Agency assist military personnel in adapting to climate change?**

In view of fully implementing the EU Climate Change and Defence Roadmap, the Strategic Compass calls on the Member States to develop national strategies by the end of 2023 to prepare their armed forces for climate change. This coordinated approach represents a significant leap forward, as it would harmonise planning, create synergies and promote collaborative projects, enabling the armed forces to adapt to the emerging environment and better equip, train and deploy their personnel.

EDA collaborates closely with the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to support the EU ministries of defence in addressing climate change and energy considerations. For instance, the Consultation Forum for Sustainable Energy in the Defence and Security Sector (CF SEDSS) – Europe's largest defence energy community – offers a unique platform for sharing best practices on improving energy efficiency and buildings' performance, utilising renewable energy sources and promoting climate adaptation in defence.

To help ministries of defence identify and mitigate risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change effects, EDA and the Commission will publish a joint study on the impacts of climate change on defence-related critical energy infrastructure. The study will also recommend measures to address the climate change and defence nexus, such as incorporating climate-proofing practices into military planning, reducing energy footprint, applying green procurement criteria, and increasing research and innovation in defence.

The efforts of the EDA to promote climate mitigation and adaptation measures will enhance energy resilience and operational effectiveness of the EU defence sector while also contributing to the EU's objective of achieving climate neutrality.

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#### **How would you like to see the Strategic Compass evolve and what do you wish to be the outcome of the closer defence cooperation between the Member States?**

Mr. Borrell, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Head of the European Defence Agency (EDA), describes the Strategic Compass as the Union's collective answer to a new strategic environment. It provides a structural framework for the EU and its Member States to develop an effective and autonomous EU defence and security policy. Although the Strategic Compass has been a valuable framework for defence collaboration, its future relevance will depend on its ability to adapt and deepen cooperation in response to emerging strategic challenges. This requires a long-term commitment from Member States, increased trust and solidarity, and an improved inter-institutional comprehensive approach. As Jean Monnet famously said, "Nothing is possible without men; nothing is lasting without institutions".

Consolidating and strengthening defence cooperation among the Member States should, from my perspective, result in the following:

- Fostering a common security and defence culture;
- Integrating a gender perspective into the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP);
- Maintaining and strengthening a coherent European defence market with a competitive and autonomous defence industry and technology base;
- Promoting enhanced coordination and coherence in responding to security challenges;
- Increasing shared situational awareness, joint intelligence and analysis, and coordinated crisis management plans for internal and external security;
- Advancing cooperation in military capability development through joint research and development, joint exercises and training, harmonisation of military requirements and joint procurement;
- Delivering on the EU's ambitions for climate neutrality.