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**Taking forward the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crises
Action Plan 2015**

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Action Plan 2015

1. Introduction:

In December 2013, the High Representative (HR) and the European Commission presented a Joint Communication¹ on the EU comprehensive approach. The basic ideas presented are straightforward – the comprehensive approach is about working better together, and enhancing the coherence, effectiveness and impact of the EU's policy and action, in particular in relation to conflict prevention and crisis resolution. It does not dictate policy or approach for specific countries or regions, nor does it propose a blueprint for EU action in any particular crisis situation. In fact, the comprehensive approach is not about "what to do", but more about "how to do it" and how to make best use of the EU's collective resources and instruments, with a particular focus on conflict and crisis situations. One key element is that EU policy and action should always take into account the country or regional context and the political realities and needs on the ground – this is where we face and deal with security threats, crisis situations and development challenges.

Following discussions with EU Member States and following consultations with a broad spectrum of stakeholders from the political, military, development and humanitarian domains, the May 2014 Council gave full support to this concept and agreed a set of ambitious *Council conclusions*² on the EU's Comprehensive Approach, including on the way forward. Stressing the need for these principles and priorities to be taken from theory to action, the Council invited the HR and the Commission to prepare an Action Plan. Building on the principles and proposals set out in the Joint Communication and the Council conclusions, this *Action Plan* thus sets out a priority set of concrete and practical actions for implementation both by the EEAS and Commission services and at national level by EU Member States.

The method of working of the new Commission under President Juncker gives further impetus to the comprehensive approach by emphasising the need to work across teams. In the area of external action the HR/VP is responsible for steering and coordinating work in order to shape a coordinated approach to deliver a more effective external action of the Union.

The preparation of the Action Plan has been guided by three main principles.

¹ Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises, JOIN(2013) 30 final.

² Council conclusions on the EU's comprehensive approach, Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 12 May 2014.

Firstly, on content, it should be noted that the comprehensive approach first and foremost is a general **working method**, and a way of doing things more effectively together that should influence and permeate all EU external action³ and "become, systematically, the guiding principles for EU external action across all areas"⁴. As such it cannot of course be reduced to a list of actions. The objective of the Action Plan is *not* to repeat the policy framework outlined in the Joint Communication and the Council Conclusions, *or* to list challenges and opportunities in all domains of EU external action. *Nor* does the Action Plan aim to "incorporate" all processes and programmes that are being undertaken to follow-up the taskings from the December 2013 European Council. ***The purpose of the Action Plan is rather to identify a selected number of key issues that were flagged in the Joint Communication and the Council Conclusions and which should be taken forward as a priority in 2015.***

Secondly, the best testing opportunity for a comprehensive approach is on the ground. In view of this, and following the Council conclusions in this regard, a limited number of **country or regional cases** have been identified where particular actions of the Comprehensive Approach can be brought forward. The cases chosen for the first action plan should represent the spectrum of conflict prevention opportunities, crisis, post-crisis and other countries where the comprehensive approach is considered to bring added value to how the EU engages in the country.

Thirdly, as stressed strongly in the Council conclusions, it is clear that the implementation of the Action Plan is a joint responsibility for the EEAS and Commission services and the Member States, in capitals and on the ground – all EU actors should contribute to taking the Action Plan forward.

2. Actions prioritised for 2015.

The following actions are prioritised in 2015.

1. Define common strategic vision

1.1 Develop **Guidelines for Joint Framework Documents (JFD)**⁵. JFDs have already been considered at several instances and in different contexts and are potentially a centre piece for a comprehensive approach. JFDs could strengthen joint analysis and the development of a common strategic EU vision and set out the EU's and Member States' objectives and priorities

³ Taking into account the special modus operandi of humanitarian aid, in accordance with the humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law.

⁴ Joint Communication – The EU's Comprehensive Approach p.2 (JOIN (2013) 30 final)

⁵ See Joint Communication "Global Europe: A new approach to financing EU external action" COM (2011) 865final, p.7.

for a particular country or region and the tools needed. In the context of EU development cooperation no country strategy paper shall be required if a JFD has been elaborated.⁶

Some of the core principles to be considered in developing these guidelines are; 1) it should be a *joint EU and Member States* endeavour; (2) delegations and embassies *on the ground* should play a key role; and (3) a cornerstone should be a *shared context analysis* (including both the political and economic context), drawing on existing knowledge. This shared analysis could be translated into a *common strategic vision* for future EU and Member States engagement which could link up the political engagement, development cooperation, the external dimensions of internal policies, policy areas like trade, economic cooperation, CSDP missions and operations, etc.

The Guidelines should be clear on process as well as its links to other strategic documents like regional strategies, the Political Framework for Crisis Approach (PFCA) documents, the programming documents for EU development instruments etc. The lessons from the joint programming process should be taken into account, especially the aspect of a process driven from the ground to enable a better understanding of the context and to maintain the appropriate level of flexibility in terms of content and priorities.

2. Mobilise the different strengths and capacities of the EU

The comprehensive approach will only develop its full potential when in concrete cases a challenge is tackled with all available and relevant policies and instruments of the EU and its Member States in a combined and/or properly sequenced manner to achieve commonly identified objectives. Lessons learned from EU support to security sector reform, CSDP capacity building missions and operations as well as longstanding EU cross-sector support to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) have highlighted the necessity to reinforce consistency and coherence between different support activities and stages, multilateral, regional and country-level engagement and different stakeholders both within the EU and in coordination with EU Member States.

In 2015 the focus will be on the following initiatives:

2.1 Capacity building in support of security and development. Building on the so called "Train and Equip initiative", efforts will be made to pursue the EU's work on capacity building in support of security and development, with the aim to enable partner countries and regional organisations to increasingly prevent and manage crises by themselves. Both CSDP missions and development cooperation efforts can help strengthen the long-term ability of partner countries and regions to better prevent and manage crises, thus paving the way for peace and stability and for sustainable development. However, experience shows that issues

⁶ See Article 11 (3)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 233/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation (DCI), OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p.44.

relating to the provision and funding of training and equipment sometimes remain a challenge for the EU's support efforts.

During 2015, in the run-up to the June 2015 European Council, the HR and the Commission will therefore present a joint Communication on possible strands for further discussion with EU Member States, taking into account recent case studies in Mali and Somalia.

2.2 Transition. Another concrete case is being discussed under the heading "transition": this is about the need for earlier and more coordinated planning between EEAS and Commission services as well as with EU Member States to enable the smooth transition from one form of EU engagement (CSDP, Member States bilateral or multilateral engagement, the UN, etc.) to another (e.g. development cooperation, Member States bilateral or multilateral engagement, the UN, etc.). Transition strategies are a key part of planning new missions or reviewing existing missions. Collaborative planning of transition strategies between the EEAS and Commission services, EU Member States, or host authorities (depending on the transition options being considered) is instrumental to successful implementation. Transition strategies should cover the whole spectrum of strategic planning, operational planning, conduct and follow up to enable all elements in the process to be strengthened. **Approaches will be elaborated to guide on-going and up-coming transitions to/from CSDP missions**, in full consistency with the rules and regulations governing the external action financial instruments.

2.3 Rapid deployment. Proactive and effective ways to draw on different strengths and capacities of EU institutions and Member States are needed to enable the EU to respond and deliver in crisis situations and/or to prevent conflict. Ad hoc and innovative solutions have been developed to draw capacities and resources across Member States and the EU e.g. in the case of Libya. On the basis of this experience **new methods will be developed for rapid deployment of joint (EEAS, Commission services, Member States) field missions and/or staff to reinforce EU Delegations.**

3. Cases

The country cases should bring forward different aspects of the comprehensive approach and include countries both with and without CSDP presence as well as places where joint efforts like joint programming are already taking place. In addition the Early Warning System is identifying countries at risk of conflict that merit close monitoring and a comprehensive EU preventive response. It could be considered to make use of the occasion of the 6-monthly EU Conflict Early Warning System process to identify a limited number of additional priority countries for this Action Plan.

Sahel – Regional Action Plan

The Council⁷ in 2011 adopted the Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel covering Mali, Mauritania and Niger in response to challenges of extreme poverty and fragile governance situation in the Sahel. The Strategy was revised in 2013 and presented to the Foreign Affairs Council in March 2014. The Council decided to extend the implementation of the Strategy to Burkina Faso and Chad, and invited the EEAS, the EU Special Representative for the Sahel and the Commission to develop a new Regional Action Plan (RAP)⁸ covering the next steps of the implementation of the 2011 Sahel Strategy. The RAP is in the process of adoption and focuses on four domains that will be reinforced:

- Preventing and countering radicalisation;
- Creating appropriate conditions for the youth;
- Migration and mobility;
- Border management and fight against illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime.

The RAP is an important example of the EU's engagement with all its instruments in a region challenged both by poverty, fragility and security threats.

In addition, the RAP specifically seeks to mobilise and align all available EU instruments, including in coordination with actions undertaken by Member States.

As part of this Action Plan, the RAP will integrate and foresee specific measures which will offer opportunities for EU and Member States to show commitment to the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach including through sharing analysis, developing strategic vision and working on conflict prevention but also through providing practical examples on how to better link internal and external action (combating terrorism and organised crime and better manage migration).

Central America – Caribbean Regional Strategy on Citizen Security

On 30 July 2014, the Council endorsed the Strategy on Citizen Security in Central and the Caribbean, drawing on the Joint Communication of the Commission and the HR "Elements for an EU strategy on public security in Central America and the Caribbean"⁹. The Joint Communication constitutes a major step towards a comprehensive and coordinated EU contribution to tackle the serious security challenges of regions exposed to high homicide

⁷ Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 21 March 2011

⁸ SWD (2015) 61 final

⁹ JOIN (2014) 21 final/2; 10108/1/14 REV1

rates and to the activities of transnational criminal organisations. The Joint Communication in particular sets out the guiding principles and objectives for EU engagement in the area of citizen security. While underlining the EU's support for existing frameworks such as the Central American Security Strategy (ESCA) and the Caribbean Security Strategy it puts forward three main objectives:

- Develop further a shared citizen security agenda with the region;
- Strengthen the ability of governments to deliver quality public services;
- Foster regional and international cooperation on operational activities in order to fight insecurity in Central America and the Caribbean.

The Council invited the HR and the Commission to prepare an action plan with the involvement of EU Member States and partner countries in Central America and the Caribbean. The action plan shall be presented to the EU-CELAC Summit in June 2015.

Afghanistan

Since the international intervention in 2001, the EU and its Member States have been substantially contributing to a huge effort of state-building, long-term development and counter-insurgency (accounting for about 20-25% of the international community's financial and military efforts). Counter-insurgency has been dominating the dynamics of the political, economic and security transition which have been laid down in the international conferences of Bonn, Chicago and Tokyo in 2011-12 and the London Conference in 2014. In view of the current draw-down of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the follow-on Resolute Support Mission and a possible complete military draw-down by the end of 2016, the political focus is now on the reform agenda of the new administration: security, governance, rule of law and economic reforms leading to a higher degree of sustainability are key objectives of the new National Unity Government.

In June 2014, the EU and Member States re-iterated their long term commitment in a new Joint Communication - elements for an EU Strategy in Afghanistan 2014-16¹⁰ replacing the 2009 Action Plan. This EU Strategy is a concrete example of a comprehensive EU approach, which includes shared EU and Member States analysis, vision, objectives, as well as specific sector initiatives supported by EU and Member States (currently 80% Member States funding; 20% EU funding). It comprises key EU elements such as an indicative amount under the Development Cooperation Instrument of EUR 1.4 billion in the Multiannual Indicative Programme (DCI MIP) (2014-2020); electoral assistance; a double-hatted¹¹ EU Special Representative (EUSR) who ensures internal EU coordination, coordination with Member

¹⁰ JOIN(2014) 17 final

¹¹ The EUSR is also Head of the EU Delegation

States in Kabul and cooperation with other members of the international community; and EUPOL Afghanistan until the end of 2016. The EU also continues to provide substantial humanitarian aid.

In terms of concrete actions in 2015, and besides a comprehensive progress report on the (sub-) objectives identified in the EU-Strategy, the following is envisaged

- sufficient progress in the public financial management allowing for more efficient on-budget contributions, notably through the Law and Order Trust Fund (or its successor arrangement) and the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, and a more programmatic approach for capacity building of Afghan key ministries such as the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice, including capacity building for civilian policing;
- a successful transition when drawing down EUPOL's activities related to enhancing police-justice linkages, including through the reinforcement of the EUSR team which should build on EUPOL's achievements;
- a refreshed framework for mutual accountability, including benchmarks for electoral reforms and possibly a common assessment mechanism for the future use of incentive tranches in EU and Member States funding;
- principled humanitarian assistance continuing to play a key role for Afghans affected by conflict and natural disasters.

Somalia

The international community, in cooperation with the Federal Government of Somalia, adopted in 2013 the Somali Compact to define priority interventions in five focus areas for 2014-2016. The EU works through this framework for its development cooperation and is engaged with three CSDP missions¹², development and principled humanitarian aid, and coordinated diplomatic actions. The office of the EUSR for the Horn of Africa enhances the coherence, impact and visibility of the EU regional approach. Somalia presents a great case for implementing the comprehensive approach, advocated already in 2011 in the Horn of Africa Strategic Framework¹³.

¹² COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2015/441 of 16 March 2015 amending and extending Decision 2010/96/CFSP on a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces. COUNCIL DECISION 2014/827/CFSP of 21 November 2014 amending Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP on a European Union military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast. COUNCIL DECISION 2014/485/CFSP of 22 July 2014 amending Decision 2012/389/CFSP on the European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP NESTOR)

¹³ Council Conclusions 14 November 2011

The following three initiatives are proposed:

- Develop shared analysis – relating to enhancing joint conflict analysis between various EU actors and Member States leading to a better common understanding and situational awareness on the ground.
- Launch the process of defining a common EU strategic vision – possible alignment of previously existing strategic documents to the Somali Compact (2013) and creation of a strategic vision linking-up EU and Member States instruments and policies.
- Mobilise the different strengths and capacities of the EU – ad-hoc thematic support to conceptualisation, identification and formulation of new interventions. In addition, the future use of the EU compound in Mogadishu and the work on **Capacity building in support of security and development**.
- Continued engagement with the African Union (AU) with focus on a) increased efforts to have better cohesion in the political arena notably as regards AMISOM/the AU's messaging and role, through involving them in political coordination meetings (including also the UN, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)) and b) continued support for IGAD's mediation involvement regarding the creation of interim regional administrations as the building blocks of a federal Somalia. The regional states are to play a key role in the integration of regional forces where IGAD can usefully expand its mediating and advisory role in relation to the Federal Government of Somalia and other partners such as AMISOM.

4. Implementation and reporting

The Action Plan will be implemented by the EEAS and the responsible Commission services in coordination with Member States and in especially with regard to the country and regional cases the delegations and Member States' embassies will play a key role.

The Council will be informed on the implementation of the Action Plan by an oral briefing in mid-2015 and a report in the first quarter of 2016.

For information - this annex provides a non-exhaustive overview of other initiatives under the policy framework of the Comprehensive Approach

State of play	Action
1. Joint Analysis, Options and Strategic Vision	
<u>Crisis Management Procedures</u> endorsed June 2013	1.1 The <u>PFCA</u> of the Crisis Management Procedures is applied systematically and draws together subject matter experts from across the EEAS and Commission services (including EU DELs).
Joint EEAS-Commission Guidance on the use of <u>conflict analysis</u> in support of EU external action, delivered 10/2013 (since then applied in more than 10 cases). Joint EEAS-Commission Guidance on addressing <u>conflict prevention, peace-building and security issues</u> under EU cooperation instruments Guidelines, delivered 10/2013	1.2 Conduct conflict analyses for selected countries, with Member States and external partners where appropriate
Joint Programming by EU and Member States for development cooperation	1.3 Joint Programming to be taken forward in potentially up to 50 countries; key elements are in-country led processes for joint analysis and joint strategic responses
2. Sharing information	
The EU Situation Room is constantly sharing its monitoring products and alerts with Member States	2.1 Enhancing the cooperation via existing mechanism (such as IPCR web platform) which is linking up the various situational awareness and

State of play	Action
Member States crisis centres and permanent representations as well as EU institutions, agencies and CFSP / CSDP missions. In 2014 the EU Situation Room has posted more than 650 its monitoring products in IPCR (Integrated Political Crisis Response) web platform which is accessible to Member States crisis rooms and structures.	emergency management centres of the Union (Emergency Response Coordination Centre and the EU Situation Room (EU SitRoom) and Member States, as well as EU agencies; further developing practices of exchanging situational reports between above mentioned interlocutors and of connecting via regular telephone or videoconferences in crisis situations; to that end, organising common events and joint trainings.
The exchange of security and military intelligence between Member States and EU institutions has improved considerably in recent years. New and effective ways to exchange intelligence, information and experience have been developed including joint seminars, workshops and monthly briefs.	2.2 Facilitate access by EU institutions/services to information and intelligence including from Member States.
3. Conflict Prevention	
<u>Early Warning System</u> trial global roll out presented in the Council September 2014 and with six-monthly updates foreseen.	3.1 Global roll out of the Early warning system. Prepare Staff Working Document setting out roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the EWS.
4. Mobilise EU – proactive EU policy response	
The Crisis Platforms chaired by HR (or ESG)	4.1 Crisis Platforms, format gathering all services from EEAS and

State of play	Action
organised as needed.	Commission working on given crises to be used in a systematic way.
5. Linking policies and internal and external action	
Support EU <u>energy</u> security policy by means of EU foreign policy	5.1 Develop a comprehensive approach, including priorities, measures and initiatives, to support the implementation of the European Energy Security Strategy of May 2014 and the Energy Union Strategy of 25 February 2015 which include both internal and external measures
Strengthen the linkages between the internal and the external dimension of <u>migration</u> policy	5.2 Identify actions and priorities to implement in a comprehensive manner the actions requested by the European Council in its June 2014 Strategic Guidelines; taking also into account the October 2014 Council Conclusions on "Taking action to better manage migratory flows".
6. Make better use of EU Delegations	
Existing offer of training on e.g. conflict analysis, mediation and dialogue. In selected cases, targeted training, coaching or workshops have been offered in country / region (e.g. countering violent extremism). Where needed short term external expertise can be mobilised by EEAS and Commission (e.g. on peace process). On case by case basis, Member States have provided Delegations with SNEs to address specific thematic expertise needed (e.g. security / SSR or	6.1 Ensure an appropriate breadth of expertise in Delegations and Embassies on security issues (including Security Sector Reform), conflict prevention, conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity, dialogue and mediation.

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conflict advisers).	
In several cases it has been possible to co-locate CSDP Missions' staff with EU Delegations, for example, EUCAP Nestor in Tanzania and EULEX Kosovo in Belgrade, and vice versa – EU Delegation staff in CSDP mission premises like in Afghanistan. Efforts are continuously being made to seek better operational synergies and to seek ways to co-locate CSDP missions with EU Delegations.	6.2 If appropriate, enable the co-location of EU actors in EU Delegations to build operational synergies.
7. Work in partnerships	
EU has an extended collaboration with the UN as well as with a large number of international NGOs, think-tanks etc. a case in point in the on-going work with the UN on Preventing Conflict – From Analysis to Action.	7.1 Engage more closely with the UN and other international organisations, major international NGOs, civil society, think-tanks, academia and public and private actors. 7.2 The EU will engage in the 2015 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, encouraging broader assessment of the Peacebuilding Architecture within the UN system and beyond in order to strengthen the performance and impact of the PBA. The EU will seek synergies of this review with the UN Secretary General's review of peace operations, the review of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and subsequent resolutions; and the Post-2015 development agenda in order to ensure coherence in the UN's actions, as well as with

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	global peacebuilding developments such as the G7+ New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.