



**2021PORTUGAL.EU**  
**Parliamentary Dimension**

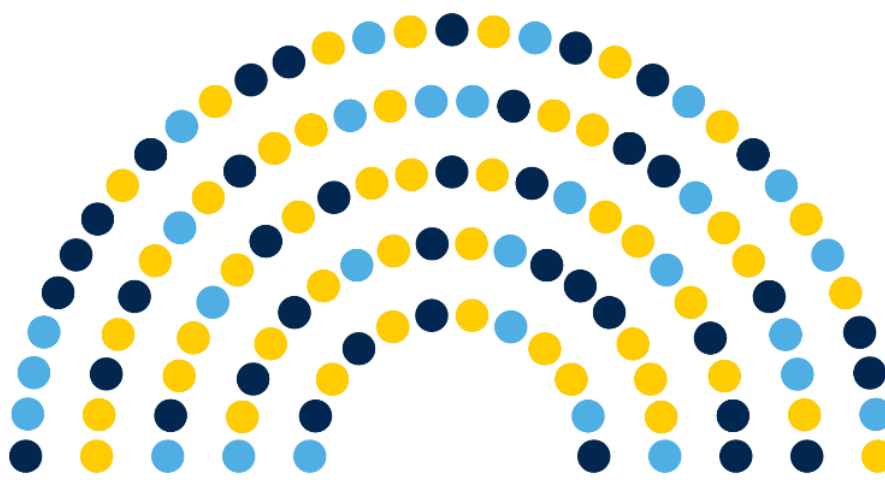
## **Background Note**

### **Defending Europe: EU-NATO cooperation and the Strategic Compass**

**Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy**

**3 - 4 March 2021, Lisbon**

**Portugal**



## BACKGROUND NOTE

### Defending Europe: EU-NATO cooperation and the Strategic Compass

Despite the fact that both the EU and NATO were born in the aftermath of the Second World War, and the existence of 21 shared Member Countries, relations between the two organizations were only institutionalised in the early 2000s, building on steps taken during the 1990s to promote greater European responsibility in defence matters, in the frame of the existent NATO-Western European Union (WEU) cooperation. The extinction of WEU transferred to the EU the defence matters that had been assigned to that organization. However, the question of true burden sharing between the two organisations and across the Atlantic was never fully answered.

The [2002 NATO-EU Declaration on a European Security and Defence Policy](#) (ESDP) reaffirmed EU assured access to NATO's planning capabilities for the EU's own military operations. In 2003, the "[Berlin Plus](#)" [agreements](#) set the foundation for the Alliance's support of EU-led operations, in which not all NATO member States are engaged.

In 2010, at the [NATO Lisbon Summit](#), the Allies underlined their determination to improve the NATO-EU strategic partnership. The 2010 Strategic Concept committed the Alliance to working more closely with other international organisations to prevent crises, manage conflicts and stabilise post-conflict situations.

From that point, the idea of Trans-Atlantic burden sharing was shaped, and nowadays the EU considers [EU-NATO cooperation](#) an integral pillar of the EU's work, aimed at strengthening European security and defence, as part of the [implementation of the EU Global Strategy](#).

The demand by the United States that the Europeans should take more responsibility for European and international security, and to improve their military capabilities, led to the two percent pledge at the 2014 NATO summit in Wales. A pledge in the same vein as that of Javier Solana in February 2006 when he invited the EU's defence ministers to spend more, to spend better, and to spend more together.

In Warsaw, in July 2016, the two organisations [outlined areas for strengthened cooperation](#) considering common challenges to the east and south, including countering hybrid threats, enhancing resilience, defence capacity building, cyber defence, maritime security and exercises. As a follow-up, in December 2016, NATO foreign ministers



endorsed a statement to which were annexed [42 common measures to advance NATO-EU cooperation](#). A [further 32 measures](#) were agreed in December 2017, before a [further joint agreement](#), on 10 July 2018, to focus on rapid progress in the areas of military mobility, counter-terrorism and strengthening resilience to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear-related risks as well as promoting the women, peace and security agenda.

The development of European defence capabilities, while ensuring coherence and complementarity and avoiding unnecessary duplication, is key in joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer. The [fourth](#), and last to date, progress report on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by NATO and EU was issued on 17 June 2019.

The EU took some time to consider taking its security and defence in its own hands seriously, and an extra five years after Warsaw to start defining what this would mean in terms of strategic orientations. A Strategic Compass is set to provide these orientations by 2022, to identify the threats and challenges the EU is facing and provide responses on how to counter them. The Compass [should explain](#) how the Union will protect its citizens, enhance its strategic autonomy and become a stronger global partner.

The Strategic Compass should also define [what kind of security and defence actor the EU wants to be](#), to answer the question whether the defence preamble of the Lisbon treaty is still valid today: that the Europeans are still “Resolved to implement a common foreign and security policy including the progressive framing of a common defence policy, which might lead to a common defence in accordance with the provisions of Article 42, thereby reinforcing the European identity and its independence in order to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world”.

[Close cooperation between the EU and NATO](#) is an important element in the development of an international "comprehensive approach" to crisis management and operations, which requires both military and civilian means.

In fact, the Strategic Compass must provide answers in a policy area where sometimes even asking the right questions requires at least as much political courage as answering them. Yet, answers are needed, and they are needed urgently. Defence spending is [gearing up](#), without a clear and collective answer what this spending is for. As long as those answers are missing spending is not necessarily better just because it is rising. It should be clear that investing more, better and together



in Europe's security and defence is the ultimate expression of solidarity and cohesion, the bond that keeps the Members together in the Union and in the Alliance.

A [first draft text of the Strategic Compass](#) is expected by November, and should reflect the threats and challenges the EU faces, and what the EU needs to do, in light of the identified threats and challenges, in the areas of crisis management and resilience to strengthen its ability to act autonomously when and where necessary.

#### **Points of Discussion:**

- How are Parliaments involved in the work on the Strategic Compass? How could an inter-parliamentary approach at EU-level be structured and would that be desirable?
- The Lisbon treaty requires the CSDP to be compatible with NATO's security and defence policy. Is that compatibility necessary and how could it be improved beyond Berlin+ agreements to capability development and armaments policy?
- Proposals for a European or an EU pillar in NATO were regularly made. What should such a pillar look like? What would it require? Could this be a realistic approach to be pursued? Why?
- Article 42(7) TEU provides for a mutual assistance clause in case of an armed attack, with two caveats, one relating to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States, and the other relating to commitments made under NATO. Given the geographic and political scopes of the EU and NATO, it is difficult to conceive conflicts that would not affect Members of both organisations at the same time or conflicts where both organisations wouldn't share the same interest in preserving freedom, peace, security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic space and its neighbourhood. Is that an issue that should be politically addressed? How could a dialogue among lawmakers be organised?
- The Preamble of the Treaty of Lisbon states that Member-States "RESOLVED to implement a common foreign and security policy including the progressive framing of a common defence policy, which might lead to a common defence in accordance with the provisions of Article 42, thereby reinforcing the European identity and its independence in order to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world". Should this level of ambition be reviewed and e.g. should this be addressed by the Conference on the Future of Europe?