



# Press Release

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## EU Defence Ministers Reach Several Milestones

### Tangible progress on European defence

Federal Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer discussed a broad range of European defence topics today in a videoconference with the European Union defence ministers. It was the last defence ministers' meeting during the German Presidency of the Council of the EU. In addition to current issues and an overview by High Representative Borrell of the ongoing missions and operational topics, the following aspects were on the agenda:

#### FIRST EVER EU THREAT ANALYSIS

For the first time, the EU has carried out a threat analysis. This is a great success and an important foundation for the EU's ability to act. The threat analysis takes a 360° perspective and deals with a broad range of threats and challenges for the EU in the coming five to ten years. Hybrid threats, artificial intelligence and new and disruptive technologies are taken into account as well. The document is classified as EU SECRET. It was prepared cooperatively by the EU Member States' intelligence services.

#### KEY PROJECT STRATEGIC COMPASS

The conclusion of the threat analysis also marks the start of the preparation of the Strategic Compass, a new major policy document, which will be flanked by a political discussion. The Member States will have an in-depth exchange about goals and priorities and how to best position themselves to achieve them, based on the threat analysis. The Strategic Compass was initiated by Germany and is a key project of the trio Council Presidency of Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia. It is to be finalised during the French Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2022. For the first time the Strategic Compass will give the European Union a common direction on security and defence.



## PESCO – PHASE II & THIRD STATE PARTICIPATION

With the Strategic Review completed, the EU defence ministers rang in the second phase of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) today, starting from 2021. In future, PESCO projects will be even more strongly geared towards operational readiness for missions abroad. One good example is the PESCO project Network of Logistic Hubs, which reached its initial operational capability on 16 November 2020. As of 2021, projects that do not generate the expected results are to be integrated into other projects or cancelled. One project was already terminated upon meeting the intended objectives (the European Union Training Mission Competence Centre, coordinated by Germany). Furthermore, after years of negotiation, an agreement has finally been reached on third-state participation in PESCO projects. This new general option for non-EU countries to participate in PESCO promises substantial added value as of 5 November 2020. This will also benefit the European pillar in NATO and EU-NATO cooperation as a whole.

## EU BATTLEGROUP

The Bundeswehr is taking on additional obligations and continuing to assume a leadership role. Germany has command of one of the two EU Battlegroups until 31 December 2020. Since there will be vacancies as of January 2021, the Bundeswehr is prepared to supply personnel for the Battlegroup next year and to continue its leading role until the end of the first quarter, exceeding its original commitment. In addition, it has pledged to contribute troops for the entire year of 2025. Germany has had command of the EU Battlegroup with about 4,500 personnel since mid-2020. 2,500 of these troops are Bundeswehr personnel. Most of them are part of the Rapid Response Forces Division, mostly airmobile and highly specialised forces.

## FURTHER TOPICS

The defence ministers adopted the final report of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and discussed the status of the European Peace Facility and the Military Planning and Conduct Capability, among other things.

## OTHER EVENTS

The last Foreign Affairs Council (Defence) took place on 16 June 2020 in a VTC format. The informal meeting of EU defence ministers took place on 26 August 2020 in Berlin. At a digital High-Level Conference on 10 December, the Presidency of the Council of the EU will be handed over to Portugal. Afterwards, the Federal Ministry of Defence will hold a digital closing event of the German Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Please click here for the DOORSTEP interview with Federal Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer.

<https://transfer.redaktionbw.de/pydio/public/4b66de>