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## **UNITED NATIONS, EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO: GLOBAL PLAYERS TOWARDS A REFORM**

### **UNITED NATIONS**

Since the beginning of the mandate of United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Italy has been proactively supporting his vast and ambitious plan to reform the United Nations System.

We believe that the full implementation of Guterres’s vision is crucial in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the UN and to preserve its pivotal role in maintaining international peace and security and preventing conflicts. Indeed, as it is now received wisdom that there is a link between peace, security, sustainable development and human rights, we fully share the vision engrained in the UN reform measures, according to which a holistic approach in “sustaining peace” is the prerequisite for the XXI century UN.

For the same reason, we are convinced that the UN needs to make its internal decision-making and governance process faster and more efficient. This is true for any International Organization, but even more so for the UN, where the so called “silos approach” had undoubtedly to be put aside, fostering synergies and collaborations and avoiding duplications among the Programmes, Agencies and different Departments of the Secretariat. The objective is to promote a new culture of accountability and decentralization, by giving more autonomy and flexibility to the Secretary General, while encouraging delegation of powers to managerial staff.

With this in mind, we welcome the implementation of the reform plans promoted by the Secretary General in the three main areas of: management, peace and security architecture and UN Development System.

As for the management reform, we welcomed the rearrangement of Departments which clearly separates the “operational support” function from “policy and compliance monitoring” functions.

In this regard, it is noteworthy the important role that the UN System Staff college in Turin and the UN Global Service Centre in Brindisi can play in the full implementation of the ambitious UN reform plan. The United Nations System Staff College in Turin is perfectly placed to help implementing a comprehensive reform of the UN human resources management, while promoting and disseminating shared values, modern leadership and managerial skills across the UN staff.

At the same time we supported the “whole-of-pillar” approach, which is one of the central features of the peace and security architecture reform, together with the concepts of “sustaining peace” and “peace continuum”. In this respect the UN Global Service Center in Brindisi, represents a fundamental hub for high added-value functions in support of peacekeeping operations in the areas of logistic engineering, information and communication technologies. Moreover, we aim at making the UN Global Service Centre in Brindisi a “Centre of Excellence” in the management of the environmental impact of UN operations, on the background of the awareness raising initiatives promoted by Italy in this respect.

With regards to the UN Development System (UNDS) Reform we supported the Secretary General’s efforts to create a new generation of country teams, tailored to context and led by an impartial and empowered Resident Coordinator. Furthermore, the UN Rome Based Agencies (FAO; WFP; IFAD), a major priority for Italy, can play a key role in implementing the UNDS Reform, thus ultimately contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals embedded in the 2030 Agenda. We believe this constitutes a major milestone towards a more effective and efficient system.

From a wider perspective, in the framework of the promotion of “effective multilateralism”, Italy also supports all initiatives aimed at relaunching the role of the United Nations through a “surge in diplomacy”. We fully understand the need to boost preventive diplomacy and revitalize the diplomatic means for peaceful resolution of conflicts, above all mediation. And Italy’s support to such a strategy is testified by the fact that Italy is the 7th contributor to both the ordinary and the Peacekeeping budget, round the 11th contributor in terms of assessed and voluntary contributions altogether (round 1bn USD in 2017) and the highest contributor of troops to peacekeeping operations among Western Member States. In this respect, I am particularly glad to bring to your attention the campaign “Service and Sacrifice” which honored Italy’s Peacekeepers among others, highlighting their invaluable contribution to UN peacekeeping operations.

## **THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY (CFSP)**

1. In the increasingly contentious international (dis)order, the European Union and its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) often find themselves between a rock and a hard place, looking more and more unfit to deal with current epochal challenges such as a resurgent China, an assertive Russia, a disruptive America, an enduring migration pressure and a turbulent neighbourhood. The alleged ineptitude of the EU shows once again what has been called as “the scapegoat effect” of International Organizations, which usually take the blame for their Member States’ inconsistencies. The EU, probably more than any other International Organization, is a rules-based entity and it is what its Member States make of it. Even if this assumption could be taken with a grain of salt in regard to policy areas where the European Commission has attained more functionalist powers and the Council decides by majority vote, the Common Foreign and Security Policy and, as a sub-set, the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) are still the realm of pure intergovernmental rule.

2. Unanimity notwithstanding, in the last three years we have witnessed to several developments regarding the EU external projection, especially in the field of Security and Defense. The 2016 “Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy” tried to harmonize strategic culture, which is at the core of every foreign policy, while providing a compass for common action. It also paved the way for subsequent initiatives aiming to increase the internal and external resilience of the EU and its neighbours, to adopt an integrated approach in coping with conflicts and crises, to foster global governance and regional cooperation, to strengthen security and defense. As for the latter, the instruments put forth so far are a Coordinated Annual Review of Defense (CARD) to better harmonize national defense planning; an European Defense Fund (EDF/EDIDP) to make the most of joint spending and EU co-financing; a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) to realize joint projects and enhance the availability and deployability of military assets; a European Peace Facility to fund third countries for the sake of peace and security.

3. Some of these instruments are already allowing greater integration between Member States, while others are still under development, facing negotiation attrition if not open US ostracism. There are also several institutional innovations attainable by incremental practice and political will.

Proposals have been made for a European Defense Council, to provide a platform for coordination among defense ministers; for an Operations Headquarters, to plan and conduct the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy; for a streamlined chain of command and even for a full-fledged defense academy. On a higher level, there is still space for instruments foreseen by the EU Treaties, such as the path toward a Common Defense as indicated in art. 42.2 TEU, the enhanced cooperation in foreign policy drafted in art. 329.2 TFEU or the expansion of the majority vote to the Common Foreign and Security Policy as in art. 31.3 TEU.

4. These are but tools, requiring a political handle. The forthcoming Brexit, whatever the result, will remove a Member State with traditionally skeptic views toward increased integration in the field of defense, while at the same time detaching the European country with the larger defense budget. This paradigm shift, far from portraying the EU as the success story it was supposed to be, has not produced, however, a decisive convergence in the strategic cultures and in the security priorities of the remaining Member States. The deteriorating security scenario on practically every corner of the EU Neighbourhood makes it even more difficult to articulate the general interest of the EU with each Member States' threat perceptions. Furthermore, the lines between internal and external security (e.g. hybrid, cyber, migrations) have been blurring to a point that the instruments of foreign and security policy, both national and European, cannot deal alone with the current complexity. From the point of view of international relations, finally, the EU has been described as the beacon of multilateralism and an actor retaining considerable soft power, which inevitably does not find itself at ease in an increasingly anarchic world witnessing the return of the power politics, where the mightier and the louder often has the last say.

5. In the face of all these issues, it betrays the underlying Kantian liberalism on which the EU is founded (and a certain degree of naivety) to believe that political problems of such magnitude could be solved by way of procedure. Whenever an EU-wide consensus could not be reached smoothly in the past on a certain issue, it was very rarely due to the veto of just one country and, likely, it was not about anything more piercing than a declaration. If we really are to reform the EU external projection and make it more effective, no institutional innovation could replace an essential qualitative leap that Europeanizes and takes into account the different identities and perceptions of the world of the European peoples. Only after this constitutive moment, it could possible to deploy all the diplomatic, economic and, eventually, military might of the EU in a way that could hopefully cope with the current and future international arena.

## NATO

As NATO turns 70, the Alliance has good reasons to celebrate an impressive record to date.

Still, it is paramount to look forward with clear eyes at the many challenges still ahead.

A complex, volatile, rapidly changing global security environment confronts the Alliance. A combination of technological, tactical, demographic, political, and economic shifts makes the world increasingly unstable. The Alliance face increasingly sophisticated cyber, hybrid, and asymmetric warfare -tactics from State and non-State actors acting in the shadows, usually below the threshold of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and blurring lines between internal and external threats.

The unravelling of the INF treaty, advanced missile technology developments and their still uncertain implications for Europe, add further complexity to NATO's security equation, hearkening back to the familiar, but uneasy days of conventional and nuclear deterrence.

Continuing instability in the Middle East and North Africa feeds ongoing transnational threats such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction proliferation, mass migration flows, and illicit trafficking by State and non-State actors. Such non-linear threats, rooted in myriad social and economic issues, require a very different, but equally comprehensive strategy on the part of the Alliance.

Technological advances in new fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, big data, and autonomous vehicles, will pose challenges hard to even fully imagine.

Keeping NATO strong, united, prepared, and equipped to handle current and evolving new threats requires new efforts. Allies need to find the right balance between strength and flexibility, breadth of mission and depth of capability, streamlined and coordinated decision-making.

What does all of this mean for the future of Europe? For the future of NATO?

Despite these significant challenges, NATO has the potential, the resources and the cohesion to move forward in political and military adaptation, effectively addressing the threats emanating from all directions, with a 360 degree approach to collective defense and deterrence.

On cyber and hybrid threats – probably the most remarkable and pervasive “new” threats – preserving NATO's technological skills will be essential.

On the threats emerging from the South, NATO needs a strengthened and coordinated posture demonstrating the Alliance's solidarity and adaptability. Existing and future partnerships with key countries and regional organizations in the Mediterranean and Gulf regions are critical for shoring up our early warning defenses, deterring threats, and promoting political dialogue and practical cooperation.

Strong coordination between NATO and the European Union, natural Partners sharing common values and complementary tools, will be a key crosscutting factor for the success of both Organizations in addressing emerging security threats.

Still, NATO's essential challenge relates more to its internal cohesion and decision making than to possible external threats.

NATO's strength and credibility will continue to depend on solidarity among Allies, representing the real core "enabler": ultimately, NATO will be effective as long as possible competitors will know that, if challenged, Allies will stay together and do what is necessary to preserve or restore peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. The transatlantic bond is both what made NATO the most successful alliance in history and the best guarantee the Alliance has for the future. NATO's identity as a defensive alliance rooted in common purpose and shared democratic values, as well as in the transparency, predictability and proportionality of conduct, is the greatest strength of the Alliance. It is also the key factor for its successful adaptation to new challenges.