European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002
Six-monthly Report
Croatian Presidency

1st January 2020 – 30th June 2020

Department of Defence
Measures, proposed measures and other developments in relation to the European Communities and the European Union

The following report is submitted to the Oireachtas in accordance with Section 2(5) of the EU (Scrutiny) Act 2002.

Part 1

Summary of Key Policy/Legislative Developments in the EU

The following is a brief summary of significant events and developments in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) for the period 1st January – 30th June 2020.

Background

Since the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP) now conducts the Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy, assisted by the European External Action Service (EEAS). In this regard, the EEAS manages the EU’s response to crises, has intelligence capabilities and cooperates with the European Commission in areas with which it shares competence.

The EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) primary function is to provide the Union with an operational capacity to undertake peacekeeping and crisis management missions outside the territory of the Member States. In addition to military tasks, there is a significant civilian and humanitarian dimension.

Croatia’s Council Presidency from January to June 2020 was the State’s first since joining the European Union in 2013. While the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in some adjustment to elements of the High Representative’s CSDP work programme during the presidency, important elements covered included:-

- Progressing work on the implementation of the EU Global Strategy on Foreign & Security Policy
- An active strategic debate on security and defence within the EU.
- A focus on coherence among defence and security initiatives, e.g. in PESCO and CARD, and embedding the EU security and defence planning and capability development initiatives in national processes.
- Progressing the Strategic Review of PESCO
The Climate and Defence agenda
Discussions on the Strategic Compass proposal
Progressing discussions of the European Peace Facility (EPF) draft Council Decision
Negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 (MFF)
Discussion of EU-NATO cooperation

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolved during the Croatian Presidency and its effect on CSDP missions and operations became apparent, the impact of such an unprecedented event was foregrounded to reflect the concerns of Member States.

Meetings and Seminars
Key meetings held during the Croatian Presidency included the formal and informal meetings of EU Defence Ministers and EU Defence Policy Directors. Due to the restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, many meetings during this presidency were held via VTC. The key agenda items discussed included inter alia (1) Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the PESCO Strategic Review and the proposed Strategic Compass, (2) the implementation of the EU Global Strategy in the defence area, (3) Coherence between the various EU Defence Initiatives, (4) Climate Change and Defence (5) EU-NATO Relations, (6) the Security and Defence dimension of COVID-19, (7) CSDP Maritime including the Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP) Concept and (8) EU CSDP Missions and Operations with a focus on the Sahel¹, amongst others.

The effect of technology on defence, hybrid threats, disinformation and the strategic narrative surrounding CSDP and EU Security and Defence, were also discussed at a number of high-level meetings during this Presidency.

A high-level conference entitled "Unlocking the Potential of European Defence Cooperation: New Opportunities for an Enhanced European Defence Industry" which was due to be hosted as part of the Croatian Presidency’s calendar of events in the area of security and defence was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a similar event has been proposed for 2021.

¹ The Sahel refers to the area of Southern Sahara and Northern Africa running in a band from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea.
The report is broken down as follows:

Part 1:
   A. EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy
   B. Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)
   C. Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD)
   D. European Defence Action Plan
   E. EU-UN Cooperation
   F. EU-NATO Cooperation
   G. Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC)
   H. Crisis Management Operations
   I. European Defence Agency
   J. EU Action Plan on Military Mobility
   K. Climate and Defence
   L. Proposed European Peace Facility
   M. Main Priorities for the German Presidency

Part 2:
Update on Proposals/Measures submitted for review by the Oireachtas

ANNEX 1
Operations conducted during the Croatian Presidency
Part 1

A. EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS)

Work continued on the implementation of the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in the area of security and defence during the Croatian Presidency. The COVID-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented challenge during the reporting period, highlighting new and previously unforeseen challenges facing the EU in ensuring the safety and security of European citizens. Implementation included milestones in relation to Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Strategic Compass, and countering disinformation in tandem with deliverables in the areas of PESCO and CARD. Progress also continued on the Commission’s European Defence Action Plan (EDAP) while this reporting period also saw the continuation of discussions of the HRVP’s European Peace Facility (EPF) proposal. As a strong supporter of CSDP Ireland remained fully engaged in discussions at EU level on the range of issues outlined above.

The third annual EU Global Strategy Progress Report – ‘The EU Global Strategy: Three Years On, Looking Forward’, presented by the HRVP at the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) with Defence Ministers in June 2019, highlights the progress achieved over the years since the presentation of the Global Strategy in June 2016. The Council Conclusions adopted welcomed the overall progress made in the implementation of the Global Strategy, particularly in relation to key initiatives on PESCO, CARD, EU/UN and EU NATO co-operation, the European Defence Fund etc. The Council also underlined the need to maintain the momentum through continued engagement of Member States and EU institutions.

At the July 2019 Plenary session of the European Parliament, HRVP Mogherini gave a speech outlining achievements under the Global Strategy and asked for consideration as to how the existing instruments may be used and how the future Foreign and Security Policy of the EU may be shaped. This speech highlighted the need for continued collective political will going forward in order to consolidate the results to date and explore new possibilities.

In February 2020, HRVP Borrell conducted his first official visit to the United States in his capacity as High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission. While there, he met with US Secretary of State
Pompeo among others and presented the foreign policy priorities of the EU, underlining a desire for close cooperation with the United States, advancing shared interests and strengthening the rules-based international order.

**Coherence**

In relation to interactions, linkages and coherence among EU defence initiatives such as Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), and European Defence Fund (EDF), the Croatian Presidency further advanced the work first initiated under the Romanian Presidency and continued by the Finnish one. The second report from the HRVP on coherence between defence initiatives was published during the Croatian Presidency, this was followed by the circulation of a joint letter by the Defence Ministers of France, Spain, Germany and Italy entitled ‘At the heart of our European Union’ in May 2020. Among a number of other topics covered, the letter called for enhanced coordination between EU Institutions and improved coherence of EU tools.

**B. Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)**

Based on Articles 42.6 and 46 and Protocol 10 of the Treaty of the European Union, PESCO provides a mechanism whereby military crisis management capabilities can be developed by Member States in support of CSDP Operations. Ireland has participated in PESCO since it was established by Council Decision on 11 December, 2017.

A total of 47 projects were established under PESCO, 46 are currently being progressed. Following the closure of the European Union Training Mission Competence Centre project in January 2020, Ireland is participating in one PESCO project, “Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance”. To date, Ireland has also confirmed Observer Status on nine other PESCO projects where we have national interests; six from the first tranche of PESCO projects (March 2018), two from the second tranche (November 2018) and one from the third (November 2019).

The most recent call for PESCO project proposals was issued in May 2019. A third tranche of 13 PESCO projects was adopted by participating Member States at the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) with Defence Ministers on 12th November 2019. No
further new PESCO projects will be added until the Strategic Review to assess fulfilment of the PESCO commitments has been completed.

The Strategic Review of PESCO was initiated during Q4 2019. This Strategic Review is required as per the Council Decision establishing PESCO which was adopted in December 2017. As 2020 marks the end of the first initial phase of PESCO, a strategic review must be completed before year-end 2020. The process for the Strategic Review began under the Finnish Presidency and continued throughout the duration of the Croatian Presidency.

PESCO and the PESCO Strategic Review were ongoing topics of discussion between January and June 2020. Discussions on the Strategic Review, informed by a scoping paper circulated by the PESCO Secretariat, took place at the January informal Defence Policy Directors meeting in Zagreb. The same month saw the submission of updated PESCO National Implementation Plans (NIPs) by participating Member States.

The Strategic Review continued as an agenda item at the informal meeting of Defence Ministers in early March. Following the circulation of HRVP Borrell’s annual report on PESCO implementation, Defence Policy Directors were invited to provide feedback at a meeting hosted by video conference in late April.

Discussions on the matters of Third State participation in PESCO projects, further progression of the Strategic Review and an update of the PESCO project governance rules will continue during the next Presidency term.

C. Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD)
The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) aims to create greater transparency by sharing Member States information on future defence policy, capability development, budgets and investment in order to provide a broad picture of the European defence capability landscape. The process will monitor defence plans including national capability development and investment and procurement proposals, as well as the implementation of CDP priorities, assess data on defence cooperation in Europe, and identify cooperative opportunities. This in turn could be taken up within
PESCO through PESCO projects possibly funded under the European Defence Fund (EDF).

The first full formal CARD process was launched in September 2019 whereby all Member States hosted bilateral meetings with the EDA CARD secretariat. Ireland hosted its CARD bilateral meeting on 15th October 2019. This engagement is valued by Ireland as providing a broader dimension to our Defence planning. In June this year the CARD Aggregated Analysis was provided to all Member States. The CARD Analysis and Report will be presented to Defence Ministers in November; it will give an overview of defence planning which will serve to enhance interoperability and capability options in a cost effective way including for consideration in the PESCO and EDF frameworks.

D. European Defence Action Plan

Implementation work on the European Defence Action Plan (EDAP) continued during the Croatian Presidency. The overall objective of the European Defence Action Plan initiative is to contribute to ensuring that the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) remains integrated, competitive, innovative, and sufficiently broad to support the development of the military capabilities for CSDP including those capabilities which Member States may need to meet future security needs.

Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP)

The Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) are the Pilot programmes of the European Defence Fund funded from the current MFF. Under the PADR – the “Research” window, the EU will offer direct funding (grants) for research in innovative defence products and technologies, fully financed from the EU budget. The PADR was allocated €90 million to fund this programme for the period up to 2020. As the precursor activity to the EDF, the EDA continued to support the implementation of the PADR in close coordination with the European Commission.
The EDIDP – the “Capability” window is focused on development and acquisition of capabilities and aims to create incentives for Member States to pool financial contributions to jointly develop and acquire key defence capabilities for CSDP operations. The EU will offer co-financing from the EU budget on the Development phase through the EDIDP with a budget of €500 million allocated for the period to 2020. A total of 12 Calls for Proposals for the EDIDP 2020 were published in April 2020 with a deadline of December 2020.

**European Defence Fund**

On 13 June 2018, the European Commission proposed a new regulation establishing the European Defence Fund (EDF) under the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The EDF is intended as an instrument to foster competition and innovation in the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). It aims to trigger cooperative programmes that would not happen without EU contribution and, by supporting research and development activities, to provide the necessary incentives to boost cooperation at each stage of the industrial cycle. The Fund will also foster innovation and allow economies of scale thus enhancing the competitiveness of the EU defence industry.

The EDF is the successor instrument to the EDIDP and the PADR – established as Pilot Programmes under the current MFF - and brings together the ‘Research’ (Preparatory Action in Defence Research) and ‘Capability’ (European Defence Industrial Development Programme) “Windows” into a single Regulation to provide financial support during the 2021-2027 MFF. It provides financial incentives for Member States to foster defence cooperation, from research, to the development phase of capabilities, including prototypes, through co-financing from the EU budget.

The new “Directorate General on Defence Industry and Space” DG DEFIS will have a responsibility in administering the EDF.

The level of funding proposed by the Croatian Presidency for the EDF within the MFF Negotiating Box is in the region of €8 billion (the original Commission budget proposal was for €13 billion). The final budget was agreed in July, under the current Germany Presidency, at €7 billion as part of the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027. No funding will flow through the EDF until 2021.
E. EU UN COOPERATION

The UN is a key strategic partner of the EU. The development of a strong and enduring partnership between the EU and the UN is critical in the face of ongoing, increasing and more complex global crises requiring a multifaceted response. Alongside the increasing EU/UN institutional engagement, EU Member States are also increasing their contributions to UN Missions.

On 18th September 2018, the European Council adopted conclusions endorsing the “Priorities of the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management for the period 2019-2021”. Ireland was instrumental in the adoption of these Council Conclusions, including recognition of the mutually beneficial nature of the longstanding UN-EU cooperation on peacekeeping and civilian, police and military crisis management. Ireland particularly welcomed the significant inclusion of women, peace and security as an overarching priority. Subsequently, in July, 2019, the European Council adopted conclusions on the EU’s priorities at the 74th UN General Assembly (September 2019 - September 2020). Under the heading of "Promoting multilateralism and supporting a revitalised United Nations" these Council Conclusions outlined the three priorities which the EU and its Member States will focus on for the duration of the 74th General Assembly. These are Conflict Prevention, Peace and Security, A Common Positive Agenda and Engagement on Global Challenges. The Priorities and the 2019 European Council Conclusions set the overall agenda for EU /UN Cooperation out to end-2021.

As of 2020, the EU and UN work together in over 170 countries. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU launched a ‘Team Europe’ package to assist those most in need with in excess of €21 billion in financial support mobilised to address the humanitarian, health, social and economic consequences of the crisis. By supporting the response plans of the World Health Organisation and the United Nations as well as promoting a coordinated multilateral response in partnership with the United Nations, the EU has further contributed to dealing with the consequences of the crisis. In April, a letter from the 27 EU Ambassadors was sent to the UN Secretary General reiterating the EU’s support for UN Peacekeeping missions and underlining a collective commitment to keeping UN Peacekeeping personnel in place despite the coronavirus pandemic. An EU-sponsored resolution at the World Health Assembly for the globally coordinated response to COVID-19 has gained the support of the international
community on global solidarity, safe and affordable medicines and vaccines, and better preparedness for future pandemics.

F. EU NATO COOPERATION

EU cooperation with NATO is focused on ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplication across both organisations in terms of structures, systems and standards across the military forces of Member States, given the extensive common European membership of both organisations. Moreover, both organisations have deployed in the same theatre of operations. The members of both organisations also face similar new, emerging and complex security threats which require coordinated and complementary responses, not least in the face of cyber and hybrid threats. Coordination of organisational responses is important across all these dimensions.

Areas benefitting from EU and NATO cooperation include; Countering Hybrid Threats, Operational Cooperation (including Maritime issues and on migration), Cyber Security and Defence, Defence Capabilities, and Defence industry and research, Exercises and Defence capacity-building. Work in these areas is ongoing via the implementation of the common set of proposals which cover 74 actions.

The fifth Progress Report on EU-NATO Cooperation was issued jointly by the EU and NATO in June, 2020. It was positive regarding progress to date, detailing a number of areas of mutual interest such as operational cooperation including maritime issues, defence industry and research, countering hybrid threats and defence and security capacity building.

The COVID-19 crisis has been to the fore in terms of EU - NATO cooperation during the Croatian Presidency. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the EU and NATO have been coordinating their respective efforts in full respect of the agreed guiding principles enshrined in the Warsaw and Brussels Joint Declarations on EU-NATO cooperation, in overlapping areas of competence at both political and working level. Within the framework of the common set of proposals, a number of elements have emerged as relevant in the context of the pandemic, including for example: countering disinformation and hostile propaganda; potential logistics support in facilitating the delivery of assistance; responding to cyber threats and exploring the implications of the crisis on respective operational engagements in theatres.
Political dialogue remains a core element of NATO – EU cooperation. The EU High Representative participated in the regular meeting of NATO Ministers of Defence in February 2020 while the Secretary General of NATO attended the meeting of EU Foreign Ministers in January 2020 and the informal meeting of EU Ministers of Defence in Zagreb in March 2020.

G. Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC)

Working under the political control and strategic guidance of the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the MPCC works in parallel to and in a coordinated way with the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability, supported by the Joint Support Coordination Cell (JSCC), which brings together the civilian and military expertise in key mission support areas. The Director of the MPCC holds the same command authority as those attributed to an EU Military Operation Commander. This command authority is for non-executive military missions only, including the current three EU Training Missions deployed in the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia. Non-executive military missions are capacity building, training and advisory missions. The MPCC, with the JSCC, will further strengthen and enable effective civilian/military coordination and cooperation at the strategic level in the operational planning and conduct of CSDP civilian and non-executive military missions.

The MPCC, which commenced initial operations in June 2017, is expected to reach Full Operational Capability in the second half of 2020. This objective was restated during the Croatian Presidency, with work continuing to fill all MPCC core staff vacancies.

As part of the steps taken by the EU to implement the Global Strategy in the area of security and defence, scenario based table top exercises are conducted with the intention of enhancing the EU’s ability to respond, within the EU’s Integrated Approach, to external conflicts and crises. An exercise specification for the EU's Integrated Resolve 2020, an enhanced Multilayer Exercise planned for 2020, was agreed by the Politico-Military Group (PMG) in December 2019 and forwarded to the PSC for approval. An evaluation of the MPCC initially planned to take place during the EU Integrated Resolve 2020 exercise, may now be limited to the examination of documents, resources and operating procedures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
H. Crisis Management Operations

A key priority for the EU in the CSDP arena is the continued successful conduct of EU peacekeeping and crisis management operations and the preparation of new missions. During the Croatian Presidency, the EU continued the implementation of mandates for a total of seventeen (17) operations - ten (10) civilian missions and seven (7) military operations and missions, eight missions in Africa, three in Europe, two in the Western Balkans, three in the Middle East and one in the South Caucasus. The reporting period covers the transition from EU NAVFOR MED Op Sophia to Op IRINI in the Mediterranean. With their mandates due to end in 2020, both EUTM Somalia and EUNAVFOR Op Atalanta, are currently under review. The COVID-19 pandemic affected several CSDP missions, notably the EU Training Missions (EUTMs). At the EU External Affairs Council in June 2020, Defence Ministers decided to focus on CSDP redeployment and to enhance operational engagement by EUTMs, based on a step by step approach as public health conditions allow.

A full list of missions and operations is detailed in Annex 1, attached. The main military operations and missions are as follows:

EU EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS (MILITARY CSDP)

OPERATION ALTHEA
The main objectives of Operation ALTHEA, launched in December 2004, are to support efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to maintain the safe and secure environment and to provide capacity-building and training support to the BiH Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces.

The Operation is the only EU executive military presence in the Western Balkans. Its continuation and credible executive mandate remain essential in the current sensitive phase of the region's EU integration path. Also, it remains the only EU operation conducted in cooperation with NATO under the Berlin Plus Arrangements, providing a concrete and practical example of a successful EU-NATO cooperation for almost sixteen years.

EUFOR ALTHEA continues to monitor and advise BiH authorities within activities related to ammunition and weapons storage sites, the civilian and military movement of
weapons and military equipment, the disposal of surplus weapons and ammunition and defence industry factories. EUFOR ALTHEA also works with international partners to try and increase the disposal rate of surplus ammunition.

In operational terms, EUFOR ALTHEA has introduced a reserve concept that has enabled the number of troops in BiH to be reduced. EUFOR ALTHEA retains its capacity to react throughout the country to any possible security challenges. Through its presence in the country and its support to the local authorities, EUFOR ALTHEA remains an important and visible contribution to the EU’s efforts in assisting BiH on its path towards EU membership.

On 25th June 2019 the second Operation Althea Strategic Review was presented to EU Member States. This Strategic Review assessed progress in the implementation of the mandate and the relevance of the mandate against the changes which have taken place in BiH since the publication of the previous Strategic Review in 2017 in a political and security context while also suggesting a way forward.

One of the primary concerns highlighted via the 2019 Strategic Review was the impending withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union due to the significant contribution the UK has made over the lifetime of the operation.

Based on the recommendations of the 2019 Strategic Review, EU Member States agreed to:
(1) fully implement and consolidate the Operation’s refocus on its core mandate,
(2) include more European Gendarmerie Force personnel in EUFOR,
(3) review the Liaison and Observation Teams concept, with the aim of increasing effectiveness and efficiency,
(4) continue maintaining EUFOR’s task to observe, monitor and inspect the disposal of BiH owned ammunition, weapons and explosives surpluses,
(5) continue EUFOR’s task to monitor BiH-owned humanitarian demining,
(6) continue the collective training of Armed Forces of BiH; and
(7) to conduct the next Strategic Review of the Operation in mid-2021.

No major threat to the security situation in BiH was identified during the January to June reporting period. Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, political factors such as divisive rhetoric and political tensions, the processing of returning foreign terrorist fighters, irregular migration and organised crime and corruption were highlighted as
potential drivers of instability. The risk to the Safe and Secure Environment (SASE) is currently assessed as low, however the migration crisis and growing tensions between the general population and migrants are highlighted as having the potential to cause a deterioration in the security situation.

As at 30 June 2020, five Irish personnel were deployed on this mission.

OPERATION EU NAVFOR ATALANTA
On 31 July 2018, the European Council extended the mandate of EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta to deter, disrupt and repress acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia until 31 December 2020.

The Operation which has been in place since 2008, is embedded in the EU’s Strategic Approach to the Horn of Africa and continues to liaise closely with the two other CSDP missions (EUTM Somalia\(^2\) and EUCAP NESTOR\(^3\)) to enhance cross-mission synergies and identify future opportunities to engage with the Somali Federal Government. The mission contributes to (1) the protection of vessels of the World Food Programme (WFP) delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia and the resupply of vessels for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM); (2) the protection of vulnerable vessels sailing in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast; and (3) the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast.

Operational output was not impacted by the March 2019 relocations of the Operational Headquarters from Northwood, London, to Rota in Spain and the Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) to Brest in France.

The EU currently has transfer agreements in place with Kenya, the Seychelles, Tanzania and Mauritius to bring those charged with piracy to trial.

Between 1 January and 30 June, Operation Atalanta continued to maintain a 100% success rate in protecting World Food Programme shipments, a memorandum of

\(^2\) EUTM SOMALIA On 10 April 2010, the European Union launched a military training mission (EUTM Somalia) in order to support the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) through training personnel of the Somali Armed Forces.

\(^3\) EUCAP NESTOR On 16 July 2012, the European Union launched EUCAP Nestor, a strengthening Civilian mission under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in order to enhance the maritime capacities of five countries in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean: Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Seychelles and Tanzania.
understanding to enhance collaboration between EU NAVFOR and the WFP was signed in March 2020.

No Irish personnel are deployed on this mission.

**EUNAVFOR MED (Operation SOPHIA)**
The EU naval operation against human smugglers and traffickers in the Mediterranean called Operation Sophia was launched at the 22nd June 2015 Foreign Affairs Council meeting. Its mission was to disrupt the human trafficking networks out of Libya and includes identifying, capturing and disposing of vessels and other enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers.

The issue of disembarkation of migrants came to the fore following the June 2018 European Council Conclusions. Italian authorities sought to progress the 'shared' aspect of the June Conclusions as soon as possible resulting in the Strategic Review of Operation Sophia being brought forward for discussion. With the matter of disembarkation unresolved a full mandate renewal, as required by 31 December 2018, could not be agreed. Therefore, on 21 December 2018, the European Council agreed a technical rollover of the mandate of the EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia until 31 March 2019.

Following discussion of the Strategic Review on 26 March, the PSC agreed to extend the Operation Sophia mandate to 30 September, 2019. The Operation Commander was instructed by the PSC to temporarily suspend the deployment of naval assets while efforts to work towards a broad solution to the issue of disembarkation continued. On 26 September, the Council decided to extend the mandate by a further 6 months until 31 March 2020. While the temporary suspension of naval assets was retained, the legal mandate of the Operation Sophia remained unchanged.

In March 2020 Operation Sophia was brought to a close. It was replaced by a new CSDP military operation in the Mediterranean, Operation IRINI.

**EUNAVFOR MED (Operation IRINI)**
The new EUNAVFOR mission in the Mediterranean, Operation IRINI was launched on 25 March 2020. The launch of Op IRINI signals a change in focus from the previous mission, with the implementation of the UN arms embargo (through the use of aerial,
The mission will be able to carry out inspections of vessels off the coast of Libya which are suspected of carrying arms to or from the country in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2292 (2016).

As secondary tasks, EUNAVFOR MED IRINI will also monitor and gather information on illicit oil exports from Libya, contribute to the capacity building and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy and contribute to the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks through information gathering and aerial patrols.

IRINI will be led by Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini, as EU Operation Commander, with Operation Headquarters (OHQ) located in Rome, Italy. The initial mandate of Operation IRINI is set to run to 31 March 2021.

As of 30 June 2020, Ireland has three Defence Force personnel deployed to the new mission's OHQ in Rome.

EU TRAINING MISSIONS

EUTM SOMALIA
This mission was launched on 7th April 2010 to train the security forces of the Somali Transitional Federal Government. The mission is part of the EU’s long term strategy for the Horn of Africa. EUTM Somalia aims to strengthen the Somali National Government as a functioning government and to empower the institutions to serve the Somali citizens, by providing military training to members of the Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF).

EUTM Somalia is now established as a highly regarded international partner in Mogadishu. It is further recognised as having the potential to make a meaningful contribution towards the creation of improved security in Somalia as part of the EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa.

Following a Strategic Review in 2015 EUTM Somalia had its mandate reoriented from activities solely focussed on the training of military personnel to a three pillar approach of advisory, mentoring and training activities in Somalia. Council Conclusions on Somalia noted the importance of building up the capacities of Somali defence institutions,
including by the provision of equipment to train and maintain needed capabilities. EUTM Somalia therefore continues to provide strategic advice to the Somali Ministry of Defence and General Staff as well as providing direct training support to the Somali National Army. On 1 January, 2019, EUTM Somalia commenced its 6th Mandate.

Frequent violent incidents in the mission area mean that careful force protection planning is necessary. During the previous reporting period, EUTM Somalia suffered two attacks without casualties, indicating that EU personnel are considered a target by militants groups such as al Shabaab. While still tenable to operate in the current threat environment, at times freedom of movement has to be limited in order to ensure the safety of EUTM Somalia personnel.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, manning remained an issue for the mission with a number of gaps in personnel limiting progress towards operational objectives. The outbreak of the pandemic saw the temporary reduction of personnel on the ground as non-essential staff were redeployed.

All physically provided training and education activities in support of the Somali National Army were suspended, selected leadership related training activities continued by video teleconference. Some limited EUTM advisory activities were maintained without physical contact utilising phone, mail etc.

No Irish Defence Force personnel are deployed on this mission.

**EUTM Mali**

On 18th February 2013 the EU launched the EU Military Training Mission (EUTM) Mali, a CSDP mission to train and mentor the Malian Armed Forces (MaAF) to improve their military capacity and their effectiveness in guaranteeing the country’s territorial integrity. The mission has two aims: (1) to reform the chain of command in areas of training, logistics and military policy to ensure obedience with civilian authority and (2) to restructure and train MAF units.

A Peace agreement in Mali (the Algiers Agreement) was signed by all parties on the 15th June 2015. The Peace Agreement is an important further step in the long process of rebuilding mutual trust and confidence. The peace deal aims to contribute to restoring
stability and security, help improve the living conditions of the population and pave the way for national reconciliation.

While progress on implementation was initially slow, in recent times there have been signs of acceleration taking place with the launch of the demobilization, disarmament, reintegration (DDR) process and the strengthening of security mechanisms in certain parts of the country. However, endemic problems of corruption and bad governance remain and the security situation remains fragile, particularly in the north and central areas of the country.

The most recent extension of the EUTM Mali mission mandate took place on 23 March 2020. This saw the scope of the mission expanded to provide military assistance to the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the national armed forces of the G5 Sahel countries. The new mandate is set to expire on 18 May 2024. Since its launch in February 2017, the establishment and operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, of which Mali is a member, has been a feature of the security and defence environment where it operates.

Following public protests which resulted in the resignation of Mali’s then Prime Minister in early 2019, terrorist armed groups have taken advantage of public discontent to reframe themselves as defenders of the population and build resentment towards the MaAF. An attack on the EUTM Mali base in Koulikoro on 24 February 2019 indicates that EUTM is also now seen as a genuine target by the terrorist armed groups.

The period from January to June 2020 saw a continuation of the upturn in attacks against Malian security and defence forces which has become evident across recent reporting periods. Attacks by terrorist armed groups on the Malian Armed Forces in January, April and June resulted in the loss of a number of soldiers.

As of 30 June 2020, a total of 20 Irish Defence Forces personnel are assigned to EUTM Mali as tactical instructors and headquarter staff. Following a reduction in personnel due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 13 are currently deployed in the mission area.

A further 13 personnel are deployed to MINUSMA, the UN’s mission in Mali, as part of an Irish Defence Forces Task Unit. Three Irish personnel deployed with the United

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4 The G5 Sahel Countries are Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.
Nations authorised MINUSMA mission in Mali sustained minor injuries following an IED blast near their convoy in February, 2020.

**EUTM RCA (Central African Republic)**

This mission, based in Bangui was launched on 16 July 2016 and was set an initial operating period of two years. It replaced the EU Military Assistance Mission, EUMAM RCA, which was launched in March 2015. In close coordination and complementarity with the MINUSCA, (the UN Mission in the Central African Republic), EUTM RCA supports the Central African Republic (CAR) Government in the implementation of the Security Sector Reform by assisting the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic - *Forces Armées Centrafricaines* (FACA). The goal is to support the build-up of a modernised, effective, ethnically balanced and democratically accountable FACA.

EUTM RCA contributes to the restructuring of the defence sector in three domains: strategic advice, operational training, and education. By the end of the first two-year mandate in September 2018, EUTM RCA had advised, trained and educated more than 3,000 serving soldiers, men and women of FACA. EUTM RCA has been involved in the writing of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) Strategy that was validated in March 2017, and in the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Repatriation (DDRR) programme. The EUTM has put pressure on FACA to start their Cadet Officer School and Non-Commissioned Officers Training School as soon as possible.

On 30 July 2018, the mandate of EUTM RCA was extended by a further two years until 19 September 2020. Under the new mandate, the mission area was extended and an advisory role to both the CAR Presidential Cabinet and the Ministry of Interior was included as part of the new Mission Plan and Mission Order.

A detachment of EUTM RCA has been located at the Instruction and Training Centre in Bouar, since June 2019. However, shortfalls remain in the manning and it is expected that this will be highlighted as a topic of concern at the end of the current mandate. The mission is pushing for the construction of a permanent base at this location.

Political focus has recently turned to the presidential election which is due to take place in late 2020. The incumbent, President Touadera has engaged in an unofficial campaign to highlight the successful implementation of his mandate.
A strategic review of EUTM RCA was published in March 2020 to provide an evaluation of the mission mandate. In June, discussions took place at the Politico-Military Group (PMG) on a set of draft recommendations on this strategic review, with the finalised document likely to include a recommendation for the extension of the mission mandate to September 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been identified as a potential threat to the security situation in the country, due to a perceived slowdown in the RCA government’s decision making process. In June 2020, armed groups carried out simultaneous attacks on the government camp in Bouar and a FACA / MINUSCA checkpoint in Paoua resulting in a number of injuries.

There are no Irish Defence Force personnel deployed to this mission.

I. European Defence Agency

During the Croatian Presidency, the European Defence Agency (EDA) continued in its mission to support the efforts of the Council and the Member States to improve the European Union’s defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The Agency has three Ministerial endorsed objectives: support the development of capabilities; serve as the preferred cooperation forum and management support structure at EU level for participating Member States to engage in technology and capability development activities; act as facilitator and interface between Member States MoDs and the European Commission and EU Agencies in exploiting wider EU policies to the benefit of Defence, as well as acting as a central operator with regard to EU funded defence-related activities.

Ireland has participated in the framework of the Agency since its establishment in 2004. Ireland’s participation in specific projects undertaken by the Agency is considered on a case-by-case basis, and is subject to Government and Dáil approval, in accordance with the Defence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009.

**Capability Development**
During the course of the Croatian Presidency, the EDA continued to initiate, establish and mature cooperative projects and programmes in order to deliver capabilities efficiently and cost effectively and thereby improve Member States defence capabilities in the area of Crisis Management and in support of CSDP.

As part of the PESCO secretariat, the EDA has supported the assessment of the third wave of project proposals, resulting in the approval of 13 new PESCO projects by the Council in November 2019, bringing a total of 47 PESCO projects. In addition, the EDA continued to provide direct support to Member States in respect of 4 of these projects. Ireland is currently a Participant on one PESCO Project “Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance” and Observer on nine projects. During the Croatian Presidency a PESCO Strategic Review process commenced and in July Ireland plans to take part in a dedicated workshop where the PESCO timelines and cycle of projects will be reviewed.

Work continued during the Croatian Presidency on the implementation of the EU Capability Development Priorities, which were approved by EDA Member States in June 2018, through the first edition of the Strategic Context Cases (SCC). The SCC will guide the practical implementation of the 11 EU Capability Development Priorities and should ensure the priorities are implemented in a way that improves the coherence of the European capability landscape and leads to cooperative projects, which contribute to closing identified capability shortfalls. On 27 June, 2019, the EDA’s Steering Board in Capability Directors composition, endorsed the first edition of the Strategic Context Cases. The Steering Board in National Armaments Directors formation met in February 2020 and endorsed the second edition of the Strategic Context Cases. This process will define which of the selected activities participating Member States (pMS) wish to pursue.

Ireland continues to support the EDA work and currently participates on a number of collaborative capability development projects: Counter Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED) – European Centre of Manual Neutralisation Capabilities; a Joint Procurement Arrangement for EU SatCom Market; a Maritime Surveillance project; Cooperation on Cyber Ranges project; and a Military Search capability development project. Ireland also continues to participate in initiatives in pooling and sharing, is actively engaged in participating in EDA meetings and is leading the Project Team on Naval Training.

The Defence Forces have been actively involved in the EDA Energy & Environment Working Group since 2014. The Working Group met twice during the Croatian Presidency. In October 2019 Phase III of the Consultation Forum was launched with a
more ambitious structure and agenda scheduled to run until 2023. Under the new structure of four Working Groups, Ireland has provided a Team Leader to coordinate the work of Working Group 2 on Renewable Energy Systems.

The EDA continues to work proactively with the European Commission and engage with NATO on relevant defence matters. The Agency has actively engaged in enhancing its relationship with the European Commission in a number of EU policy areas that have potential implications for defence. The EDA has a role in managing activities on behalf of the Commission in relation to the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP). It also has secretariat/administrative functions in relation to PESCO and the Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD).

J. EU Action Plan on Military Mobility

Since March 2018, military mobility as an area of activity in terms of the European security and defence agenda has gained momentum. While the primary driver for this has been the difficulty faced by EU/NATO members in the rapid forward deployment of forces to Eastern Europe and the Baltics for defence purposes, current EU rules and regulations also pose challenges in deploying military personnel to exercises and to the CSDP operation in the Balkans. Military Mobility is also viewed as being important in the context of CSDP operations, exercises and Battlegroup deployments.

In March 2018, the HRVP and the Commission adopted a joint communication on the Action Plan on Military Mobility. The Action Plan covers a number of areas including; military requirements, infrastructure, dangerous goods, customs and VAT, as well as cross border movement permission. These actions are not restricted to the Defence area alone but affect many more ministries such as Departments of Transport, Foreign Affairs and Trade and Customs. Therefore, any national discussions in relation to military mobility requires a whole of Government approach. There is also a Dutch-led PESCO project on military mobility where Ireland has Observer Status and is not a participant.

Under the Action Plan, the EU Military Committee were tasked with compiling a draft Military Requirements document for military mobility. The general part of this document was agreed by Council in June 2018, while the annexes were agreed at the Foreign
Affairs Council with Defence Ministers in November the same year. Subsequently a gap analysis between the military and the TEN-T requirements was compiled, and an update finalised in September 2019.

The European Defence Agency's first annual report on military mobility was published in May 2019, with the HRVP’s first progress report on military mobility titled ‘Joint Report to the European Council and Parliament on the implementation of the Action Plan on Military Mobility’ following in June of the same year.

Recent developments in the area of Military Mobility have seen an annual progress report on the topic circulated by the EDA in March 2020. In the context of the next Multiannual Financial Framework, a revised proposal was put forward by the EU’s Council of Ministers in May 2020 which would see a Military Mobility budget of €1.5 Billion for the period 2021-27.

Ireland has acknowledged the importance of military mobility as a concern for a number of Member States. Ireland has also stated in the various EU fora that military mobility is a matter of national sovereignty and requires a whole of Government approach.

K. Climate and Defence

The 2016 EU Global Strategy sets out that climate change and energy insecurity endanger EU citizens and EU territory and that a step change is essential. As also pointed out in the 2017 Joint Communication on Resilience, climate change will increasingly be the cause of, or a contributing factor to many conflicts worldwide.

In its June 2019 Council Conclusions on Security and Defence in the context of the EU Global Strategy, the Council underlined the significance of environmental issues and climate change for security and defence. It emphasised the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies and acknowledged the relevance of climate change for CSDP missions and operations. This was the first time the Council adopted explicit language on the link between climate change and defence.

In December 2019 the EEAS circulated a joint reflection paper entitled 'Climate and Defence - Contributing to the Climate and Security Nexus including in the context of CSDP' in consultation with the Commission as a follow up to the June 2019 Council
Conclusions and the August discussions on Climate and Defence by Defence Ministers. This reflection paper maps relevant ongoing work in interlinked areas including the operational context, capability development aspects and partnerships in order to identify opportunities and potential future work strands. From this mapping a number of key issues and potential actions were identified for further consideration.

The reflection paper was presented at the PSC by acting DSG Herczyński on 15 January 2020. The paper was welcomed by the Commission and an exchange of views between Member States took place following the presentation. Further discussion on Climate and Defence took place at January’s informal meeting of Defence Policy Directors in Zagreb. Work in this area is expected to continue under the upcoming Presidencies as conditions allow.

L. Proposed European Peace Facility

The European Peace Facility (EPF) proposal was published by High Representative Mogherini, with Commission support, on 13th June 2018. The proposal is for an off-budget funding mechanism that will be an instrument of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defence Policy.

The initial proposal called for the EPF to draw together and expand existing off-budget mechanisms devoted to security and defence in three key areas:

1. EU military operations and the ATHENA funding mechanism;
2. Support to partners’ military peace support operations, building on the African Peace Facility (which is currently funded through EU Foreign Ministries);
3. Broader actions of a military/defence nature in support of CFSP objectives, also known as ‘Capacity Building for Security and Development’ (CBSD), where currently support is limited to the Commission’s development-focused instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP+)

The proposal for an EPF is broad-ranging, covering governance and financial ceilings, among other things. In its current form, it is proposed that the EPF should increase funding for the common costs of EU military operations under the Athena mechanism, replace the African Peace Facility with an expanded facility which is global in scope and provide additional support for partner nations outside of the current Capacity Building for
Security and Development’ (CBSD) remit. Discussions continued throughout the Croatian Presidency as Member States worked towards shaping the ultimate form of the EPF. Between February and March 2020, developments included the presentation of a document on the EPF by the EEAS to Coreper. This was followed by a discussion on the same document at PSC, with the Politico-Military Group (PMG) invited to produce recommendations following its presentation there. Discussions continued to reach agreement on the allocation for the 7-year period of the next EUs Multiannual Financial Framework.

M. Main Priorities for the German Presidency

Under the post-Lisbon Treaty arrangements, the High Representative and European External Action Service drives the agenda in the areas of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The overall theme for the German Presidency is "Together for Europe's recovery". The guiding principles for Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union are set out under six headings:

- overcoming the consequences of the coronavirus crisis for the long-term as well as economic and social recovery
- a stronger and more innovative Europe
- a fair Europe
- a sustainable Europe
- a Europe of security and common values
- a strong Europe in the world

The German presidency of the Council of the EU intends to focus directly on overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic by fighting the spread of the virus, supporting the European economy to recover and reinforcing social cohesion in Europe. In order to achieve this, Germany is committed to joint approved action, European solidarity and common values.

Important elements of the High Representative’s CSDP work programme in the area of security and defence during the German Presidency from July to December 2020 include:
Coherence among defence and security initiatives, e.g. in PESCO and CARD, and embedding the EU security and defence planning and capability development initiatives in national processes.

An active strategic debate on security and defence within the EU.

Progressing the Strategic Review of PESCO

European security and defence in the post COVID-19 environment.

Progressing discussions on the European Peace Facility.

Discussion of CSDP operational engagement with partners such as the UN and NATO

Meetings and Seminars
The German Presidency will hold specific events to complement the efforts of the HRVP and the EEAS in the area of CFSP and CSDP. Key meetings to be held during Germany’s Presidency, in the Defence space, include the Formal and Informal meetings of EU Defence Ministers and EU Defence Policy Directors. Germany will open the defence and security calendar of events for their Presidency of the EU with a Defence Policy Directors informal meeting on 13 July 2020.

Additional Information
Part 2

Update on Proposals/Measures submitted for review by the Oireachtas
Nil.
ANNEX 1

Operations conducted during the Croatian Presidency

Europe
EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine)*
European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean - Operation Sophia (EUNAVFOR Med) *^
European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean - Operation IRINI (EUNAVFOR Med) *^  

South Caucasus
European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia)*

Western Balkans
EU Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea)* ^
European Union rule of law mission in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO)*

Middle East
EU Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS)*
EU Border Assistance Mission at Rafah Crossing Point in the Palestinian Territories (EU BAM Rafah)
EU Advisory Mission in Iraq (EUAM Iraq)

Africa
EU Naval Anti-Piracy Mission off the Somali coast (EU NAVFOR Atalanta)^
EU Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP SOMALIA)*
EU Military Mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces (EUTM Somalia) ^
EU Capacity Building Mission in Niger (EUCAP SAHEL NIGER)*
EU Military Mission to contribute to the training of Mali security forces (EUTM Mali) * ^
EU Capacity Building Mission in Mali (EUCAP SAHEL MALI)*
EU Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUAM RCA)
EU Military Mission to contribute to the training of CAR Security Forces (EUTM RCA) ^
EUBAM LIBYA*  

* Irish Participation
^ Denotes a Military Operation – the remainder are Civilian Missions