

**22nd Inter-Parliamentary Conference
for the Common Foreign and Security Policy
and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/CSDP)**

Stockholm, 2-3 March

Joint Statement by the Co-Chairs

The 22nd Inter-Parliamentary Conference (IPC) for the CFSP/CSDP was held in the context of the parliamentary dimension of the Swedish Presidency of the EU Council on 2 and 3 March 2023. It was attended by parliamentarians from the EU Member States, the European Parliament, observers from EU candidate and potential candidate countries and European NATO-countries together with distinguished guests. The following statements are non-binding conclusions from discussions of the different thematic issues.

We the co-chairs of the 22nd IPC:

1. Welcome the determination and commitment of the European Union and its Member States in reinforcing the rules-based multilateral order and defending democratic principles globally. Note that the Russian war of aggression continues to cause unprecedented geopolitical shifts in Europe. Underline that a commitment through multilateralism is the only viable method to deal with monumental global challenges like climate change and the energy crisis, next to impeding the influence of authoritarian actors.
2. Reiterate the crucial role that parliaments play in the scrutiny and oversight of EU external action, call for an increased involvement of national parliaments and of the European Parliament in discussions on the EU's soft and hard power. Note the need for a stronger and more effective EU foreign and security policy including by using more efficient decision-making procedures.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine

3. Continue to condemn in the strongest possible terms the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, and call for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces from all Ukrainian territory including Crimea. Underline the EU's resolve to provide Ukraine with the military equipment and training it needs, including the unprecedented use of the European Peace Facility and bilaterally by Member States, to defend its citizens and regain effective control over its entire territory within its internationally recognised borders.
4. Underline the need to prepare and apply further sanctions until Russia withdraws from all Ukrainian territory. Call for the elimination of any evasion of sanctions and the funnelling of monies through third countries. Welcome the decision of the Council to impose restrictive measures in response to the involvement of the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Iran in view of its supply of suicide-drones to the Russian Federation for use against Ukraine, in particular against civilians.

5. Encourage the EU, together with partners, to step up its work towards the use of Russia's frozen and immobilised assets to support Ukraine's reconstruction and for the purposes of reparation, in accordance with EU and international law.

6. Share the strong commitment to accountability expressed by the European Council and welcome the EU and international community efforts in this respect, including the establishment of an appropriate mechanism for the prosecution of the crime of aggression, which is of concern to the international community as a whole.

7. Welcome the decision to grant Ukraine status as a candidate country. Recall that enlargement is one of the EU's most successful policies and a geostrategic investment in long-term peace, stability and security on the continent. Reiterate that the accession process should refocus on the principles of democracy, fundamental rights and the rule of law, and be matched with genuine reconciliation and thorough policy alignment including with the CFSP.

8. Reaffirm that the future of the people of the Western Balkan countries as well as Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia lies within the EU. Underline the need to considerably strengthen resilience to hybrid threats, malign influence, disinformation and foreign interference into democratic processes in the Western Balkans. Call for efforts to be stepped up to promote the role and benefits of enlargement and close partnership between the EU and the Western Balkans.

9. Underline the need to further strengthen EU-US transatlantic cooperation in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine by means of an ambitious transatlantic agenda, based on the principle of partnership of equals in leadership and responsibility, while respecting the other party's autonomy and specificities, interests and aspirations. Recommend that summits between the EU and the United States should be held on a regular basis and at least once a year in order to give a continued high-level impetus to transatlantic cooperation. Welcome the establishment of a new EU-US security and defence dialogue as an important milestone in closer transatlantic cooperation.

10. Highlight the need to intensify the dialogue with the United Kingdom on possible avenues for future cooperation and coordination on foreign, security and defence policy, in line with the provisions of the Political Declaration and within the framework of the EU-NATO partnership, the United Nations, the European Political Community and other international fora. Urge closer EU-UK cooperation, as we are facing common challenges on foreign and security issues. Welcome the good EU-UK cooperation on the support provided to Ukraine, and especially UK participation in the military mobility project.

11. Denounce Russia's interference in Africa, in particular through the increased footprint of the so-called Wagner group on the continent. Call for an Africa-European partnership to foster solidarity, security, peace and lasting prosperity, as well as for swift EU action to counter the growing Russian presence through the Wagner group.

12. Stress the importance of strengthening relations with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) by updating the EU-LAC strategy, in particular against the backdrop of the increasing and disproportionate influence of the People's Republic of China and Russia in the region in comparison with the EU and the increased threats to European supply chains due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

13. Emphasise the geopolitical importance of the Global Gateway strategy, which could be a game-changer for EU partnerships in the world. Recognise the dire need for an inclusive connectivity cooperation model based on democratic values offered to partner countries, bearing the potential to effectively tackle shared challenges and creating links instead of dependencies. Call to implement the Global Gateway in a Team Europe approach, as Global Gateway investments can only reach the scale and create tangible and visible impact on the ground if supported by the collective capabilities mobilising all EU institutions, Member States, their Development Finance Institutions, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European private sector.

The EU's Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – Challenges and opportunities

14. Welcome the new EU initiatives to enhance European security and defence as well as the capabilities of EU Member States, notably following the Versailles Declaration and the adoption of the Strategic Compass. Recall that the Strategic Compass adopted by the Council in March 2022 gives the EU and its Member States strategic guidance and the tools to improve their defence capabilities, to become an effective security provider in an increasingly adversarial global and regional environment and a more assertive global actor for peace and human security. Call for the balanced implementation of the Strategic Compass, according to the agreed timelines and commitments across its four key pillars:

- a. Act: by boosting CSDP mission experts, enhancing Military Mobility, strengthening CSDP Missions and Operations, and making more use of the European Peace Facility, as well as by establishing the Rapid Deployment Capacity;
- b. Secure: by boosting intelligence analysis, developing a Hybrid Toolbox Response Teams, developing the Cyber Toolbox and set up a Cyber Defence Policy, develop a foreign information manipulation and interference Toolbox, develop a Space Strategy for Security and Defence and strengthen the EU as a maritime security actor;
- c. Invest: by substantially enhancing defence spending and strengthening the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base, invest in strategic enablers and next generation capabilities, boost defence technological innovation and reduce technological and industrial dependencies;
- d. Partner: by strengthening cooperation with strategic partners in particular NATO and the UN, and develop bilateral security and defence dialogues with like-minded partners.

15. Welcome the third Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation and urge the EU and those Member States who are also NATO allies to ensure the coherent implementation of the objectives and priorities highlighted in the Strategic Compass, NATO's Strategic Concept and the third Joint Declaration. Underline that these strategic documents adopted by the EU and NATO require further intensification of consultations and cooperation in order to enhance the security of EU-citizens and promote peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond.

The Arctic

16. Deplore the stagnation in the urgently needed pan-Arctic cooperation due to Russia's actions. Call on the international community to mitigate the negative spill-over of the consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine on the Arctic, where the preservation of peace, prosperity and stability should remain a priority. Express our concern

about Russian military activities in the Arctic, reaffirm the strategic importance of the region, and call for a stronger EU engagement in the region.

17. Recognise the key strategic importance of the Arctic for the EU in view of climate change, industrial and economic policies, free navigation as well as geostrategic influence, in particular in view of the growing Russian and Chinese interests and activities in the region.