

Council conclusions on countering hybrid threats

1. The increasing use of hybrid strategies and operations by state and non-state actors in the immediate and wider EU neighbourhood requires swift and appropriate action to prevent and counter hybrid threats to the Union and its Member States as well as partners. The Council underlines the need to mobilise EU instruments to this end, in line with the Conclusions by the European Council of June 2015 and the Council Conclusions on CSDP of May 2015, while recognising the primary responsibility of Member States for security and defence and taking into account relevant ongoing work as regards both internal and external policies.
2. In this context, the Council welcomes the Joint Communication on countering hybrid threats and fostering resilience of the EU and its Member States as well as partners. It invites the relevant Council instances, the European Defence Agency and other relevant bodies to examine, in a timely and coherent manner, the proposed actions, with due respect for respective procedures and the competences of the Member States, the Commission and the High Representative, ensuring a cross-sectoral approach and appropriate follow-up. The Council also invites Member States to consider establishing a European Centre of Excellence.
3. The Council welcomes the intention of the High Representative to create an EU Hybrid Fusion Cell, and highlights the possible CSDP contributions to countering hybrid threats and the need for closer dialogue, cooperation and coordination with NATO, respecting the principles of inclusiveness and autonomy of decision-making of each organisation, as well as with other partner organisations.
4. The Council invites the Commission and the High Representative to provide a report by July 2017 to assess progress.