

2025
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

*Simplification,
Implementation
& Enforcement*

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1. Introduction

This report covers progress on **key policy objectives and implementation and simplification** in the field of foreign affairs and security policy during the period 1 January – 31 July 2025.

As **High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission (HRVP)** it is my responsibility to lead a more strategic and assertive foreign and security policy that better enables the EU to pursue its strategic interests and shape the global system. This includes strengthening Europe's capacity to act, deepening our mutually beneficial partnerships and promoting our values and interests around the world.

In terms of **decision-making**, foreign policy is defined and implemented by the European Council and by the Council of the European Union. In particular, the Political and Security Committee (PSC) plays a central role in the definition of the response to crises. It provides the strategic orientation and political steer for the areas covered by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), including operations and assistance measures to be funded under the European Peace Facility (EPF).

The **European External Action Service (EEAS)** is the diplomatic service of the EU that supports me as High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in the conduct of the EU common, foreign, security and defence policy building and consolidating international partnerships. It has democracy, human rights and the rule of law at the core of its action, supporting a rules-based international order and representing the EU and engaging with partners across the world and in international organisations through the global network of EU Delegations. Through this it contributes to international peace and to the development of European defence through military and security structures, including by deploying missions and operations. This provides a high level of awareness, offering a platform to EU member states for the sharing of intelligence analysis.

The **Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI)** under my guidance works to address foreign policy challenges such as support to multilateralism, mediation, electoral observation, counterterrorism, humanitarian mine actions, maritime security and fight against foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI). FPI manages the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) budget and acts as administrator for assistance measures under the European Peace Facility. FPI also leads the work on two regulatory instruments supporting EU foreign policy objectives¹.

Together with the European Parliament, FPI funds the EU's flagship public diplomacy programme, the **European Union Visitors Programme**, which is managed by an inter-institutional team under the guidance of a head of unit of the European Parliament.

¹ The foreign policy regulatory instruments overseen by FPI are the 'Anti-Torture Regulation' and the 'Kimberley Process Regulation', aimed at preventing respectively trade in goods that could be used for torture or capital punishment and trade in conflict diamonds. The 'Anti-Torture Regulation' prohibits trade in goods that are inherently abusive and have no other practical use than capital punishment, torture and other ill-treatment and requires that goods that have a legitimate purpose but carry a risk of being misused for death penalty, torture and other ill treatment, undergo export controls by EU Member States' authorities.

The EU implements the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme through Council Regulation (EC) No. 2368/2002 ('Kimberley Process Regulation'), which establishes a system of certification and import and export controls for rough diamonds, aimed at preventing trade in 'conflict diamonds'. FPI represents the EU in the Kimberley Process and monitors implementation of the Regulation by EU Member States.

2. Executive Summary

The **key priority areas of EU foreign policy action** continue to be tackling the dreadful repercussions of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine extending far beyond its borders in terms of concrete threats to global energy and food security and economic instability, strengthening Europe's security and defence, the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, notably in Gaza, and in Africa, including Sudan and the Sahel. In an era of geostrategic rivalries with the systematic attack on the rules based order, our common values and the weaponisation of all type of policies EU foreign and security policy needs to be more strategic, more assertive and more united in pursuing its strategic interests and in shaping the global system. We must continue to strengthen Europe's capacity to act, deepen our mutually beneficial partnerships and promote our values and interests around the world.

With the support of my services, we have made progress on a range of topics, from **support to Ukraine** and **strengthened partnerships** on the global stage, to enhancing our defence readiness and preparedness, to **regulatory instruments** and **renewed engagement with stakeholders**.

As Ukraine's top supporter, the EU has provided EUR 173.5 billion in total support, including nearly EUR 63.2 billion in military aid, and pledged over EUR 24 billion in military support in 2025. My initiative to deliver to Ukraine 2 million rounds of high-calibre ammunition in 2025 has already achieved 80% of its target.

Furthermore, together with the EEAS I have been playing a key role in preparing the groundwork for the future Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on security guarantees. This involves coordinating with EU member states, analysing security needs, and engaging with international partners to establish a framework that would provide Ukraine with credible, long-term security assurances. This preparatory work is essential to ensure a coherent and effective EU response in supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and defence capabilities.

At the beginning of July 2025, I reached an understanding with Israel on the expansion of the humanitarian aid into Gaza. The EEAS and Commission services are closely monitoring how Israel implements this common understanding plus the pledges made and are updating EU Member States on the compliance every two weeks. Furthermore, following discussions at the European Council, on 15 July 2025, I presented the Foreign Affairs Council with an inventory of potential actions the EU could take to pressurise Israel to improve the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza.

For the Foreign Affairs Council working methods to become more effective and to allow to adopt in the European foreign policy decisions reflecting the EU geopolitical power, also on the global scene I have initiated a reflection with Member States for EU decision-making in Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) to become faster and more efficient, including through the use of constructive abstention, as well as Qualified Majority Voting where it is foreseen in the Treaty.

I chaired **nine meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council**, including configurations for Foreign, Development, and Defence Ministers. Together with the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, we organised two informal meetings with EU Foreign Affairs ministers and with EU Defence Ministers that took place in Warsaw. In June, I chaired an informal video conference meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers. Moreover, a number of **ministerial meetings** with third countries were held in the past months ranging from Association Councils (with Israel, Ukraine, Southern Neighbourhood, African Union, Central America, Moldova) to high-level political dialogues and intergovernmental conferences (with the Palestinian Authority, Albania, Montenegro).

During the reporting period as **High Representative** I issued 19 **Statements on behalf of the EU**.

The work described in chapter 3. *Delivering results* is continuing to **fulfil the specific mandate outlined in my mission letter**, to ensure that Europe engages and responds to the concerns of those partners impacted by European legislation with the objective to fine-tune the precise modalities for engagement with the concerned countries building on existing political and policy dialogue platforms involving EU Delegations.

3. Delivering Results: Key Measures

A. Simplification and stress tests

It is of crucial importance for **EU competitiveness** to reduce the administrative and regulatory burden on business and stakeholders, including reporting obligations, stemming from EU legislation. The EEAS, however, has very limited legislative responsibilities² in this regard and the legal acts adopted by the High Representative do not create regulatory duties and do not primarily impact business directly. The Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments does not currently plans simplification measures such as stress tests or reality checks.

FPI is also working on a review report on the implementation of the '**Anti-Torture' Regulation**, as required by Article 32 of the Regulation, following the adoption of a delegated act amending Annexes II and III to the Regulation (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/928 of 21 May 2025), which broadens the scope of goods either prohibited or regulated when exported to third countries. We will continue to support and give impulse to the 'Torture Free Trade' process globally, promoting the Alliance for 'Torture-Free Trade', further engaging in the UN 'Torture Free Trade' process in cooperation with the EEAS and relevant EU Delegations. Strengthening cooperation with other partners and engaging with civil society entities will also be central to this work in 2025.

Another important milestone during the 2025-2029 period will be the preparation of the **next multiannual financial framework (MFF) instruments**. The EEAS has worked with Commission services, including the FPI, to prepare the proposal adopted in July 2025, which considerably reduced and simplified existing financing instruments.

Furthermore, with the support of the EEAS I am backing the ongoing work for the simplification of the External Financial Guarantee scheme. The proposal tabled by the European Commission in 2025³ would provide an additional boost to investments, key to make the most of limited funding through leveraging capital. These changes will cut red tape and unlock additional resources for our external action. By doing this, we can get more done with the available funds and better support those who need it most.

The maximum amount of budgetary guarantees is foreseen to almost double in the proposed Global Europe if compared to NDICI⁴ (from EUR 53 billion to EUR 95 billion), and to increase from EUR 7.8 billion to EUR 48 billion for Ukraine.

B. Implementation and enforcement⁵

Russia's war of aggression against our Ukrainian neighbours has been raging for more than three and a half years. EU military support to Ukraine is critical for the country to defend its sovereignty, territorial integrity, freedom and independence against Russia's war of aggression and be in a position of strength to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

² Legislative proposals of the EEAS are: related to the adoption of restricted measures (sanctions); High Representative proposals for Council Decisions on CFSP measures (e.g. financial support to implementation of UN conventions) or related the European Peace Facility; EEAS acts adopted by the Commission (executive decisions or implementing decisions) such as agreements to replace a Head of Mission or adopting a multiannual indicative programmes.

³ Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on amending Regulation (EU) 2021/947 as regards increased efficiency of the External Action Guarantee COM/2025/262 final of 28 May 2025

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2021/947 establishes the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), aimed at promoting EU values and enhancing cooperation with non-EU countries

⁵ Enforcement of EU rules is mainly relevant for Executive Vice-Presidents and Commissioners responsible for legislative acquis in their portfolios. As this is not the case for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, this section focuses only on the implementation of relevant policies.

Between December 2024 and July 2025, the European Union adopted several sanctions packages targeting Russia to increase pressure amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. These measures focused on key sectors such as energy, finance, transport, and the military-industrial complex, while strengthening anti-circumvention efforts. Notably, the 16th to 18th packages expanded restrictions on Russian vessels, companies, and infrastructure, and extended sanctions to Belarus. Throughout this period, I have played a central role in coordinating sanctions policy, ensuring unity among member states, and representing the EU's stance internationally. These measures aimed to weaken Russia's war capabilities and reaffirm the EU's commitment to a just and lasting peace for Ukraine.

By July 2025 the EU and its Member States have provided almost **EUR 60 billion in military support to Ukraine**, in addition to €218 million provided as rapid response since 2021:

- Providing **military equipment**: with the support from the EPF, the EU steadily supported Ukraine Armed Forces to address their pressing military and defence needs. Stepping up those efforts is a priority, in particular the delivery of air defence and anti-drone systems, as well as large-calibre ammunition. The EU committed to supply Ukraine with two million rounds of ammunition in 2025 and as HRVP I have delivered on this through efficient coordination of Member States efforts.
- **Training Ukrainian soldiers**: thanks to the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine – EUMAM – which was launched in 2022, over 80,000 Ukrainian soldiers to date were trained and equipped. Training ranges from CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear) defence to tactical planning and manoeuvre preparation.
- **Supporting Ukraine's defence industry**: in line with European Council conclusions, the White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030 underlined the importance of further supporting and developing Ukraine's defence industry and its cooperation and integration with the European defence industry.
- In addition, we have mobilised **windfall profits** – extraordinary revenues generated from immobilised Russian sovereign assets – for an amount of EUR 3.7 billion, out of which EUR1.4 billion were invested into the Ukrainian defence industry.
- In order to ease the unbearable suffering of the people in **Gaza**, in July 2025, the EU negotiated an understanding with Israel, under which Israel undertook to improve humanitarian access to Gaza for food, medical supplies and fuel, improve infrastructure and ease conditions for humanitarian workers.” See it also highlighted there.
- During the negotiations for the latest ceasefire in Gaza, end of 2024, EUBAM Rafah presence and specific role on the ground at the Rafah Crossing Point, has been instrumental in securing a final agreement by both parties. The ceasefire lasted from 19 January until 18 March 2025, the EU's EUBAM Rafah border assistance mission supported the Palestinian Authority in helping more than 4,000 people to leave the Gaza Strip, many of them requiring urgent medical treatment.

A **European Defence Union** is an imperative. Together with European Commissioner for Defence and Space Kubilius, I therefore presented in March of this year the White Paper for European Defence and the ReArm Europe Plan – Readiness 2030. The Commission presented a proposal for a Council regulation establishing the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) through the reinforcement of European defence industry Instrument. I launched work for the implementation of the priority capability areas that were agreed by the European Council:

In May 2025 together with the European Commission I presented in a Joint Communication the EU strategic approach to the Black Sea region.

Following the visit of the College to Delhi in February, in June 2025, I co-hosted the first **EU-India Strategic Dialogue** in Brussels, which fed into the adoption on 17 September 2025 of a Joint Communication on a new Strategic EU-India Agenda.

Recognising the growing complexity of security threats, in June I also launched a **Security / Defence Dialogue with the Philippines**.

The EEAS has in the past three years worked with the Commission on the links between internal and external EU policies as a continuum, from **environment, climate and energy** to **digital** and **food security** starting with two EU Green Deal flagship initiatives, the EU Deforestation Regulation and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

Internally in the EU institutions, in order to respond to concerns expressed by EU partners worldwide, the EEAS has enhanced its work with the Commission services from inception to implementation of EU legislation. This has resulted in an effective and operational approach coordinated by the EEAS and involving the RELEX family and the relevant DGs of the Commission through a constructive internal *modus operandi* which improved the external dimension of complex legislative files. This method is now being taken to the next level to systematically ensure that we embed the external dimension across all our policy work. This work matters to our partners, to our credibility, as well as to our competitiveness, and leading role in multilateral fora. Lack of understanding of the impact of our policies exposes the EU to unjustified accusations or undue criticism.

On this basis, in the **EU external policy dimension**, the EU has stepped up cooperation and increased dialogue with partners worldwide including with civil society, listening first and then responding to the concerns of the countries outside the EU regarding the impact of our measures on their economies and societies. In concrete terms, we are moving towards a more systematic assessment of these impacts, anticipating the ex-ante understanding of the effects of planned legislative measures before proposals are included in the Commission Work Programme, while also improving EU impact assessments to fully consider also the cumulative effects of EU laws on our partners.

These efforts overall have also resulted concretely in numerous activities in the form of **thematic information sessions** for EU partners but notably for the network of EU Delegations and supported by detailed briefing materials, guidance documents and Frequently Asked Questions, for EU Delegations to be in a position of explaining in full the EU measures and engage in meaningful dialogue with our partners.

When it comes to **regulatory instruments**, FPI continued to advocate for the **Kimberley Process** (KP) to address the implications for the diamond trade of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. To this end, the Commission works closely with the EEAS, the EU Member States, third countries and stakeholders. Close cooperation will remain instrumental in the context of the G7 restrictive measures against Russian diamonds and efforts towards enhanced traceability of natural diamonds. In an increasingly difficult and conflictual environment, the EU continues to keep advocating for a meaningful reform of the KP, particularly for broadening the definition of 'conflict diamonds' to break the link between diamonds and conflict and to ensure the KP keeps pace with contemporary challenges.

The foreseen bi-annual **implementation dialogues** represent an excellent opportunity for the Commission to interact with stakeholders. However, in light of the intense and rapidly evolving international agenda, I focused on outreach activities to third partners and international organisations (African Union, ASEAN Forum, G7, NATO and the conference on countering Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference, to name a few). And in this regard the EEAS and FPI have assisted in the ongoing implementation and simplification cycle through the HRVP political support to this crucial agenda and participating in other types of interchanges with relevant external action elements.

The annual flagship FIMI conference from March 2025 has further enhanced dialogue and networks with business communities that are affected by information manipulation attacks, shedding light on the tactics of perpetrators and proposing counter-responses to participants.

It was my honour to host a **Youth Policy Dialogue** in March 2025, bringing together young people from different backgrounds and Member States, to discuss together the challenges we face in the area of foreign and security policy.

On 21 May, an EU-Africa Civil Society and Youth virtual event was organised back-to-back with the EU-AU Ministerial.

In the context of my visit to the Philippines in June, my participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum in July and my visit to Japan for the EU-Japan Summit in July, I held meetings with civil society organisations and youth representatives to foster inclusive dialogue and to ensure that youth perspectives are integrated in policymaking.

As indicated in the 2025 Annual Progress Report on Simplification, Implementation and Enforcement of Commissioner Kubilius the implementation dialogue organised under his responsibility with industry stakeholders emphasised their readiness to speed-up and ramp-up defence production as the EU needs to act now and investments in innovations to be used on the battlefield are crucial. The implementation dialogue brought forward concrete regulatory hurdles the EU defence industry is currently facing, such as the need for faster permitting and procurement procedures, the need for exemptions in chemical legislation and better access to finance for the defence industry. This fed into the Defence Simplification Omnibus Proposal that makes rules clearer and reduces the overall administrative burden so that defence SMEs can fully tap in their innovation potential.

At my initiative EU Development Ministers discussed in May the implications of USAID's withdrawal from development assistance and, while not in a position to entirely fill the void left by the United States, decided to focus on several European priorities, such as democracy, press freedom, and human rights.

At a time of growing spread of manipulative content, independent journalism is more important than ever. In May, at my initiative, the EU decided to mobilise support for the vital work of Radio Free Europe via a EUR 5.5 million "short-term emergency funding" grant. It will provide a "safety net" for independent journalism following the decision of the Trump administration to freeze US federal grants to the media outlets.

In this context it is also pertinent to mention the work done under my guidance by the EEAS on countering Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) as information operations can also affect EU economic security and competitiveness. The EEAS has moreover organised the yearly flagship conference on FIMI in March 2025, bringing together practitioners, civil society, national authorities and business representatives to discuss the need to collectively respond to information threats. By tackling manipulative behaviour online that targets EU decision-making and national democratic processes, the EEAS contributes to the competitiveness of the Union, building resilience against attacks trying to undermine EU values, strategic interests and economic security.

Finally, in the broader simplification perspective starting in 2024 and hand in hand with the European Commission and the EEAS, I launched a process of review of our network of Delegations. Much like with any national diplomatic service, this review served to ensure we have a network that better reflects the EU's interests and priorities in an ever-evolving geopolitical context. It was an opportunity to ensure that the EEAS can deliver on its mission, and can continue to engage with, and support partners in an effective way.

The discussions I led with the Commission and the EEAS has resulted in a number of adjustments that will render the network of Delegations more structurally agile. This decision is now being implemented. While maintaining the EU's global presence of 145 Delegations and offices around the world, and retaining an overwhelming majority of standard Delegations, the EEAS has adapted the size of certain – a small number – of our Delegations for a network fit for the future, also mindful of current budgetary constraints.

4. Way forward

My services will continue to work to shape and coherently **translate European Union foreign policy into action** as part of a comprehensive geopolitical vision. In line with the Commission's political guidelines, we will deliver on the global aspects of security, democracy and prosperity in the period 2025-2029.

The EEAS will continue to address **global challenges, strengthen the EU's ability to preserve peace and provide security for its citizens, to promote EU interests and values and advocating for democracy, human rights, the rule of law and multilateralism** on the world stage. This commitment naturally extends across several key areas, including significant ramifications to cooperation on international partnerships, trade, cooperation on security and defence, neighbourhood policy, humanitarian aid and civil protection, sustainable development and green transition.

In this context, the EEAS will continue to contribute to the **EU repositioning on the global stage** continuing to focus on supporting Ukraine, strengthening European defence and security, and reinforcing international

partnerships, while supporting the multilateral global order. In particular, advance a positive global agenda that leaves no one behind including in discussions on reform of the multilateral system to turn it into a modern and efficient system and building on the 2024 UN Pact for the Future and the fourth Financing for Development Conference in 2025.

The activities and operations managed by FPI under the **CFSP** and **EPF** will contribute to general objective 2 'A new era for European defence and security'. The EU electoral observation missions and the implementation of the 'Anti-torture Regulation' will contribute to general objective 5 'Protecting our democracy, upholding our values. Activities in support of peace, stability and conflict prevention; and response to crisis and to global and transregional threats will contribute to general objective 6 'A global Europe: leveraging our power and partnership'.

The **CFSP budget**, managed by FPI, supports civilian CSDP Missions, EU Special Representatives and non-proliferation and disarmament actions, as determined by the Council. The monitoring of the budget implementation and the close measuring of the absorption rates of CFSP funding beneficiaries will remain key in 2025.

The **EPF** is financed through contributions from the Member States outside the Union budget with a financial ceiling of EUR 17 billion for the period 2021-2027. It plays a critical role in presenting the EU as a credible global actor, preserving peace, preventing conflicts and strengthening international security.

EU electoral missions play a crucial role in EU support for human rights and democracy. The deployment of missions aims to build confidence in and enhance the reliability and transparency of electoral processes and institutions at all stages of the democratic electoral cycle.

During 2025, FPI will continue **close cooperation** with the EEAS, including EU Delegations, and relevant Commission services to identify timely and flexible crisis response actions to address new and emerging crises worldwide. Actions will continue to address new challenges linked to conflict prevention, conflict dynamics, mediation and conflict resolution. Actions in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its destabilising impacts, particularly in the wider European and Central Asia region, will remain a primary focus for crisis response interventions.

My services will continue to provide adapted responses to the complex situation in the Middle East and Sudan and uphold stabilisation efforts in the Sahel and neighbouring coastal states. They will also continue engagement in the rest of Africa, the Americas, and Asia in line with needs and opportunities identified during the year.

There will be an EU-Africa Civil Society and Youth Forum in person on 20-21 November 2025 in Luanda Angola just before the EU-AU Summit.

The EEAS and the European Commission will continue to take part in the upcoming interinstitutional negotiations (2025-2027) of the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) instruments and the preparations for the implementation of the post-2028 external financing instrument. The EEAS will also be closely involved in the preparation and implementation of Council decisions to be taken on the CFSP post-2028 and on the EPF.

Finally, I will host an **implementation dialogue on mediation** on 27-28 October 2025, in the margins of the seventh EU Community of Practice on Peace Mediation⁶ (EU CoP 2025) meeting. Entitled '*The role of the EU as a global peace actor: new approaches to cater for new mediation challenges*', the dialogue will be an opportunity to engage stakeholders, share best practices and evaluate together how the current and future challenges in mediation can be met.

⁶ The Community of Practice on Peace Mediation (CoP) is a flagship EU event that convenes peacebuilders, mediators, think tanks and academia, together with EU and national experts and diplomats and international organisations. It allows discussions on mediation and peace process support and enables knowledge exchange on challenges and best practices.