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II

(Non-legislative acts)

REGULATIONS

COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) 2018/1784

of 9 July 2018

amending Delegated Regulation (EU) No 639/2014 as regards certain provisions on the greening practices established by Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 637/2008 and Council Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Articles 45(6)(b) and 46(9)(a) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Articles 38 to 48 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 639/2014 ⁽²⁾ lay down rules supplementing the provisions on greening practices established by Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013.
- (2) Regulation (EU) 2017/2393 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽³⁾ amending several provisions on greening practices established by Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 entered into force on 30 December 2017. The amendments concerning the greening practices apply since 1 January 2018. In order to clarify and ensure consistency between relevant obligations of the operators, these amendments require that certain provisions of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 639/2014 be adjusted.
- (3) Where Member States decide that land covered by grass that has not been ploughed up for five years or more is considered permanent grassland pursuant to point (a) of the third subparagraph of Article 4(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2017/2393, or, decide that the area of permanent grassland may include other species such as certain shrubs or trees pursuant to point (b) of this subparagraph, or decide that certain land which can be grazed is considered permanent grassland pursuant to point (c) of this subparagraph, they should adapt, if necessary, their reference ratio in order to take account of possible significant effects on that ratio of applying these decisions.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 608.

⁽²⁾ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 639/2014 of 11 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy and amending Annex X to that Regulation (OJ L 181, 20.6.2014, p. 1).

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2017/2393 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2017 amending Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), (EU) No 1306/2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy, (EU) No 1307/2013 establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy, (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and (EU) No 652/2014 laying down provisions for the management of expenditure relating to the food chain, animal health and animal welfare, and relating to plant health and plant reproductive material (OJ L 350, 29.12.2017, p. 15).

- (4) Following the introduction in point (a) of the third subparagraph of Article 4(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2017/2393, of the possibility for Member States to decide that land covered by grass that has not been ploughed up for five years or more is considered permanent grassland, an area of permanent grassland may lose that qualification not only as a consequence of its conversion into arable crops but also as a consequence of ploughing. Article 44, paragraph 1, of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 639/2014 should be adapted to reflect this new possibility.
- (5) Article 3(9)(b)(i) of Regulation (EU) 2017/2393 introduces three new types of ecological focus areas, extending the current list by areas with *Miscanthus*, areas with *Silphium perfoliatum* and land lying fallow for melliferous plants (pollen- and nectar-rich species). Recital (45) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 emphasises the importance of ecological focus areas to be established in a coherent way. It is therefore necessary to clarify the relation between the newly introduced types of ecological focus area and the already existing ones.
- (6) Firstly, as regards areas under 'land lying fallow for melliferous plants', since these areas formed part of the ecological focus area type 'land lying fallow', the existing management requirements for the latter should continue to apply. In particular, the ban on agricultural production, the minimum duration to be set by Member States and the ban on the use of plant protection products, set out as regards 'land lying fallow' should also apply as regards 'land lying fallow for melliferous plants' even if sowing melliferous plants is allowed on areas under this new ecological focus area.
- (7) In addition, to remove doubts that might arise by the introduction of the new type of ecological focus area and address risks that crops normally used for production are sown on it, given the biodiversity objective of the ecological focus area, it should be clarified that in line with the non-production requirement such areas should not include areas under crops which are normally cultivated for harvesting purpose.
- (8) However, since Annex X to Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 as amended by Regulation (EU) 2017/2393 allocates a higher weighting factor for the new ecological focus area 'lying fallow for melliferous plants', referred to in Article 46(2)(m) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, than to the 'land lying fallow' referred to in Article 46(2)(a) of that Regulation, the distinction between the two types of ecological focus areas should be clarified. In particular, in order to ensure legal certainty for farmers as regards the species which are considered as being pollen- and nectar-rich and, therefore, as 'melliferous plants' for the purposes of point (m) of the first subparagraph of Article 46(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 the list of such species should be established. Considering the variety of agronomic conditions and species across the Union, the choice of the appropriate species should be left to Member States. However, invasive alien species within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾ should not be used in these areas, as they pose risk to native biodiversity, inter alia, by hampering native plant-pollinator interactions.
- (9) Furthermore, to maximise the biodiversity benefits of such areas, Member States should be allowed to decide on possible relevant additional management requirements such as mixtures of species. Last, given that the presence of non-predominant grass species and the use of hives do not affect the biodiversity effect of land lying fallow for melliferous plants, the presence of hives should be allowed.
- (10) In order to safeguard and improve biodiversity in line with the objectives of 'greening' management requirements as regards the use of chemical inputs (mineral fertilisers and plant protection products) should be set up for the newly established ecological focus areas of *Miscanthus* and *Silphium perfoliatum*. In particular, considering their relatively more harmful impact on biodiversity, the use of plant protection products on these areas should be banned while allowing for their use only in the first year so that to help in their establishment. Delegated Regulation (EU) No 639/2014 should therefore be amended accordingly.
- (11) This Regulation should apply to aid applications relating to calendar years starting as from 1 January 2018. However, given the time necessary for the national authorities and farmers to adjust to the requirements established by this Regulation concerning the ecological focus areas, the corresponding amendments should only apply with respect to aid applications relating to calendar years starting as from 1 January 2019,

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35).

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Amendment of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 639/2014

Delegated Regulation (EU) No 639/2014 is amended as follows:

(1) in Article 43, paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:

‘3. Member States shall adapt the reference ratio if they assess that there is a significant impact on the evolution of the ratio due to, in particular, a change in the area under organic production, a change in the population of participants in the small farmer scheme or when a Member State takes a decision in accordance with point (a), (b) or (c) of the third subparagraph of Article 4(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013. In such situations, Member States shall inform the Commission without delay of the adaptation made and the justification for that adaptation.’;

(2) in Article 44, paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

‘1. Member States may provide for the individual obligation of farmers not to convert, including, where they apply point (a) of the third subparagraph of Article 4(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, not to plough, areas of permanent grassland without prior individual authorisation. The farmers shall be informed of that obligation without delay and in any case before 15 November of the year in which the Member State concerned so provides. That obligation shall only apply to farmers who are subject to the obligations under Chapter 3 of Title III of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 with respect to areas of permanent grassland that are not subject to Article 45(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013.

The issuing of an authorisation may depend on the application of objective and non-discriminatory criteria, including environmental criteria. If the authorisation referred to in the first subparagraph is subject to the condition that another area of a corresponding number of hectares is to be established as permanent grassland or, where the Member State applies point (a) of the third subparagraph of Article 4(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, to the condition that another or the same area is established as permanent grassland, that area shall, by way of derogation from Article 4(1)(h) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, be considered as permanent grassland as of the first day after the conversion, including the ploughing. Such areas shall be used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage at least for the five consecutive years following the date of conversion including the ploughing. However, if the Member State so decides, where farmers convert areas which were already used to grow grasses and other herbaceous forage into areas of permanent grassland, such areas shall be used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage for the remaining number of years needed in order to reach the five consecutive years.’;

(3) Article 45 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

‘2. On land lying fallow and land lying fallow for melliferous plants (pollen- and nectar-rich species) there shall be no agricultural production. Member States shall fix a period during which the land must be lying fallow in a given calendar year. That period shall not be shorter than six months. As regards areas under land lying fallow for melliferous plants, Member States shall set up a list of pollen- and nectar-rich species to be used. Invasive alien plant species within the meaning of Article 3(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (*) must not appear on the list. Such areas shall not include areas under crops normally sown for harvesting. Member States may establish further requirements. Such areas may include herbaceous species, provided that melliferous crops remain predominant. Without prejudice to the “no production” requirement established in paragraph 10a, hives may be put on areas of land lying fallow for melliferous plants (pollen- and nectar-rich species).

By way of derogation from Article 4(1)(h) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, land lying fallow and land lying fallow for melliferous plants (pollen- and nectar-rich species) for the purpose of fulfilling the ecological focus area for more than five years shall remain arable land.

(*) Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35).’;

(b) the following paragraph 8a is inserted:

'8a. On areas with *Miscanthus* and *Silphium perfoliatum* Member States shall ban the use of plant protection products except in the first year in which the two species are established by a farmer. Member States shall ban or establish requirements as regards the use of mineral fertilisers on these areas, taking into account the objective of the ecological focus areas in particular to safeguard and improve biodiversity.'

Article 2

Entry into force and application

This Regulation shall enter into force on the third day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

It shall apply to aid applications relating to calendar years starting as from 1 January 2018.

Point 3 of Article 1 shall apply to aid applications relating to calendar years starting as from 1 January 2019.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 9 July 2018.

For the Commission
The President
Jean-Claude JUNCKER

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 2018/1785
of 15 November 2018
concerning the classification of certain goods in the Combined Nomenclature

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 October 2013 laying down the Union Customs Code ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 57(4) and Article 58(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to ensure uniform application of the Combined Nomenclature annexed to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87 ⁽²⁾, it is necessary to adopt measures concerning the classification of the goods referred to in the Annex to this Regulation.
- (2) Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87 has laid down the general rules for the interpretation of the Combined Nomenclature. Those rules apply also to any other nomenclature which is wholly or partly based on it or which adds any additional subdivision to it and which is established by specific provisions of the Union, with a view to the application of tariff and other measures relating to trade in goods.
- (3) Pursuant to those general rules, the goods described in column (1) of the table set out in the Annex should be classified under the CN code indicated in column (2), by virtue of the reasons set out in column (3) of that table.
- (4) It is appropriate to provide that binding tariff information issued in respect of the goods concerned by this Regulation which does not conform to this Regulation may, for a certain period, continue to be invoked by the holder in accordance with Article 34(9) of Regulation (EU) No 952/2013. That period should be set at three months.
- (5) The measures provided for in this Regulation are in accordance with the opinion of the Customs Code Committee,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

The goods described in column (1) of the table set out in the Annex shall be classified within the Combined Nomenclature under the CN code indicated in column (2) of that table.

Article 2

Binding tariff information which does not conform to this Regulation may continue to be invoked in accordance with Article 34(9) of Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 for a period of three months from the date of entry into force of this Regulation.

Article 3

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 269, 10.10.2013, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ Council Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87 of 23 July 1987 on the tariff and statistical nomenclature and on the Common Customs Tariff (OJ L 256, 7.9.1987, p. 1).

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 15 November 2018.

*For the Commission,
On behalf of the President,
Stephen QUEST
Director-General
Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union*

ANNEX

Description of the goods	Classification (CN code)	Reasons
(1)	(2)	(3)
<p>Insulated cables (so-called 'stack cables') in various lengths fitted with connectors at both ends.</p> <p>Each cable consists of 32 insulated single conductors for a voltage not exceeding 1 000 V, bundled into 16 sheathed pairs which are not twisted. These pairs are covered by a metal foil and metal threads.</p> <p>The cables connect switches that form switching stations (so-called 'stacks') used in telecommunication networks (Local Area Networks (LAN)). They enable the bidirectional transfer of data between switches using Ethernet technology.</p> <p>The cables do not have any additional functions (for example, to supply electric power).</p> <p>See image (*)</p>	8544 42 10	<p>Classification is determined by general rules 1 and 6 for the interpretation of the Combined Nomenclature and by the wording of CN codes 8544, 8544 42 and 8544 42 10.</p> <p>Data transfer between apparatuses using telecommunication technology, such as Ethernet, is considered telecommunication for the purposes of CN code 8544 42 10 (see Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1112/2012 ⁽¹⁾). The cables in question are designed to be used in telecommunication networks configured as LAN. Consequently, they are considered to be electrical conductors, fitted with connectors, used in telecommunication networks (see also CN Explanatory Notes to sub-heading 8544 42 10).</p> <p>The articles are therefore to be classified under CN code 8544 42 10 as other electric conductors for a voltage not exceeding 1 000 V, fitted with connectors, of a kind used for telecommunications.</p>

(*) The image is purely for information.



⁽¹⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1112/2012 of 23 November 2012 concerning the classification of certain goods in the Combined Nomenclature (OJ L 329, 29.11.2012, p. 9).

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 2018/1786**of 19 November 2018****approving an amendment to the specification for a Protected Designation of Origin or a Protected Geographical Indication ('Chianti Classico' (PDO))**

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007 ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 99 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The Commission has examined the application for the approval of an amendment to the specification for the Protected Designation of Origin 'Chianti Classico', sent by Italy in accordance with Article 105 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013.
- (2) The Commission has published the application for the approval of an amendment to the specification in the *Official Journal of the European Union*, as required by Article 97(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 ⁽²⁾.
- (3) No statement of objection has been received by the Commission under Article 98 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013.
- (4) The amendment to the specification should therefore be approved in accordance with Article 99 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013.
- (5) The measures provided for in this Regulation are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee for the Common Organisation of the Agricultural Markets,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

*Article 1*The amendment to the specification published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* regarding the name 'Chianti Classico' (PDO) is hereby approved.*Article 2*This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 19 November 2018.

For the Commission
The President
Jean-Claude JUNCKER

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 671.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 100, 16.3.2018, p. 7.

DECISIONS

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2018/1787

of 19 November 2018

amending and extending Decision 2010/96/CFSP on a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Articles 42(4) and 43(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

- (1) On 15 February 2010 the Council adopted Decision 2010/96/CFSP ⁽¹⁾, establishing a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces.
- (2) On 12 December 2016 Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/2239 ⁽²⁾ amended Decision 2010/96/CFSP and extended the mission until 31 December 2018.
- (3) Following a strategic review of the mission, the Political and Security Committee has recommended that the mandate of the mission be extended by two years.
- (4) Decision 2010/96/CFSP should be amended accordingly.
- (5) In accordance with Article 5 of Protocol No 22 on the position of Denmark, annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Denmark does not participate in the elaboration and implementation of decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications. Denmark does not participate in the implementation of this Decision and therefore does not participate in the financing of this mission,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Decision 2010/96/CFSP is amended as follows:

(1) in Article 1, paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

‘2. In order to achieve the objectives set out in paragraph 1, the EU military mission shall be deployed in Somalia in order to address both institutional building in the defence sector through strategic advice as well as direct support to the Somali National Army through training, advice and mentoring. From 2019 onwards, the EU military mission shall, in particular, contribute to developing the Somali National Army’s own training capacity with a view to handing over training activities for tactical units once conditions are met; it shall mentor Somali-owned and -provided training. The EU military mission shall also be ready to provide support, within its means and capabilities, to other Union actors in the implementation of their respective mandates in the security and defence area in Somalia.’;

(2) in Article 10, the following paragraph is added:

‘7. The financial reference amount for the common costs of the EU military mission for the period from 1 January 2019 until 31 December 2020 shall be EUR 22 980 000. The percentage of the reference amount referred to in Article 25(1) of Decision (CFSP) 2015/528 shall be 0 % and the percentage referred to in Article 34(3) of that Decision shall be 0 %.’;

(3) in Article 12, paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

‘2. The mandate of the EU military mission shall end on 31 December 2020.’.

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision 2010/96/CFSP of 15 February 2010 on a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces (OJ L 44, 19.2.2010, p. 16).

⁽²⁾ Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/2239 of 12 December 2016 amending and extending Decision 2010/96/CFSP on a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces (OJ L 337, 13.12.2016, p. 16).

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Luxembourg, 19 November 2018.

For the Council
The President
F. MOGHERINI

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2018/1788**of 19 November 2018****in support of the South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) for the implementation of the Regional Roadmap on combating illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Articles 28(1) and 31(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

- (1) On 16 December 2005 the European Council adopted the EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition ('the EU SALW Strategy'), subsequently revised in 2018, which set the guidelines for Union action in the field of small arms and light weapons ('SALW'). The EU SALW Strategy noted that the Union will, as a priority, support regional initiatives to combat illicit SALW and their ammunition, providing financial and technical support for regional and national organisations responsible for implementing relevant regional instruments. The EU SALW Strategy mentioned the Balkans as a priority region for support.
- (2) On 17 May 2018, at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia, the EU leaders agreed on the Sofia Declaration, to which the Western Balkans partners aligned themselves, and which includes the commitment to enhance significantly operational cooperation in the fight against international organised crime in priority areas such as firearms, drugs, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings.
- (3) The Western Balkans region remains one of the sources of illicit arms trafficking into the Union.
- (4) On 13 June 2018 the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy ('the High Representative') presented a Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on elements towards an EU strategy against illicit firearms, SALW and their ammunition entitled 'Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens'.
- (5) On 10 July 2018 the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland hosted the 5th Western Balkans Summit in London, which adopted the 'Regional Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024' ('the Roadmap'), which was prepared by the SALW commissions of the Western Balkans in the framework of the Franco-German donor coordination initiative on illicit firearms trafficking in the Western Balkans. Those commissions are preparing their action plans for the implementation of the Roadmap.
- (6) The United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted on 25 September 2015, affirmed that sustainable development cannot be realised without peace and security and that illicit arms flows are amongst the factors which give rise to violence, insecurity and injustice.
- (7) At the third UN conference to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in June 2018, UN Member States undertook to strengthen partnerships and cooperation at all levels in preventing and combating the illicit trade in SALW, and to promote and strengthen border cooperation and regional and subregional coordination.
- (8) The goals of the Roadmap agreed by the Western Balkans partners are consistent with the efforts within the Union and the UN to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition. Therefore, the Union should support the Western Balkans in implementing the Roadmap.

- (9) SEESAC, established in Belgrade in 2002 and functioning under the joint mandate of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), which is the successor to the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, assists national and regional stakeholders in controlling and reducing the spread and misuse of SALW and ammunition, and thus contributes to enhanced stability, security and development in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. SEESAC places particular emphasis on the development of regional projects to address the reality of cross-border flows of weapons.
- (10) The Union previously supported SEESAC by means of Council Decision 2002/842/CFSP ⁽¹⁾, extended and amended by Council Decisions 2003/807/CFSP ⁽²⁾ and 2004/791/CFSP ⁽³⁾, as well as by means of Council Decision 2010/179/CFSP ⁽⁴⁾, Council Decision 2013/730/CFSP ⁽⁵⁾, extended by Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/2051 ⁽⁶⁾, and Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356 ⁽⁷⁾.

The agreement concluded pursuant to Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356 expires on 29 December 2019.

- (11) The Union considers SEESAC to be the preferred implementing partner for the implementation of the Roadmap in the Western Balkans, because of its proven experience and established network, the proven quality of its work and its coordinating role in the preparation of the Roadmap.
- (12) In addition, this Union action should provide support for countering illicit arms trafficking in the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

1. With a view to fighting the illicit trade in firearms and SALW in the Western Balkans and reducing the risk of illicit arms entering the Union from the Western Balkans region, the Union shall support Western Balkans partners with the implementation of the 'Regional Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024', pursuing the support of the Western Balkans partners in reaching the goals set out in the Roadmap, namely: ⁽⁸⁾

- (1) By 2023, ensure that arms control legislation is in place, fully harmonized with the EU regulatory framework and other related international obligations and standardized across the region.
- (2) By 2024, ensure that arms control policies and practices in the Western Balkans are evidence based and intelligence led.
- (3) By 2024, significantly reduce illicit flows of firearms, ammunition and explosives (FAE) into, within and beyond the Western Balkans.
- (4) By 2024, significantly reduce the supply, demand and misuse of firearms through increased awareness, education, outreach and advocacy.

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision 2002/842/CFSP of 21 October 2002 concerning the implementation of Joint Action 2002/589/CFSP with a view to a European Union contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons in South East Europe (OJ L 289, 26.10.2002, p. 1).

⁽²⁾ Council Decision 2003/807/CFSP of 17 November 2003 extending and amending Decision 2002/842/CFSP concerning the implementation of Joint Action 2002/589/CFSP with a view to a European Union contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons in South East Europe (OJ L 302, 20.11.2003, p. 39).

⁽³⁾ Council Decision 2004/791/CFSP of 22 November 2004 extending and amending Decision 2002/842/CFSP implementing Joint Action 2002/589/CFSP with a view to a European Union's contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons in South East Europe (OJ L 348, 24.11.2004, p. 46).

⁽⁴⁾ Council Decision 2010/179/CFSP of 11 March 2010 in support of SEESAC arms control activities in the Western Balkans, in the framework of the EU Strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition (OJ L 80, 26.3.2010, p. 48).

⁽⁵⁾ Council Decision 2013/730/CFSP of 9 December 2013 in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South East Europe in the framework of the EU Strategy to Combat the Illicit Accumulation and Trafficking of SALW and their Ammunition (OJ L 332, 11.12.2013, p. 19).

⁽⁶⁾ Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/2051 of 16 November 2015 amending Decision 2013/730/CFSP in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South East Europe in the framework of the EU Strategy to Combat the Illicit Accumulation and Trafficking of SALW and their Ammunition (OJ L 300, 17.11.2015, p. 19).

⁽⁷⁾ Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356 of 19 December 2016 in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South-East Europe in the framework of the EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition (OJ L 348, 21.12.2016, p. 60).

⁽⁸⁾ <http://www.seesac.org/f/docs/News-SALW/Roadmap-for-sustainable-solution.pdf>

- (5) By 2024, substantially decrease the estimated number of firearms in illicit possession in the Western Balkans.
 - (6) Systematically decrease the surplus and destroy seized small arms and light weapons and ammunition.
 - (7) Significantly decrease the risk of proliferation and diversion of firearms, ammunition and explosives.
2. In addition to the objectives referred to in paragraph 1, this Union action shall provide support for countering illicit arms trafficking in the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.
 3. In order to achieve the objectives referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, the Union shall, by means of this Decision:
 - (a) support the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans;
 - (b) support authorities in the Western Balkans in fully harmonising their arms-control legislation with the Union regulatory framework and other related international obligations; and
 - (c) provide support for countering illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus through capacity assessments and technical assistance to the law-enforcement and border-police authorities.
 4. The project's geographic scope is the Western Balkans, with direct project beneficiaries being Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo *, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In addition, the project will seek to continue support to the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, which are dealing with similar SALW control challenges, through the transfer of knowledge and experiences gained and best practices developed in the Western Balkans since 2001.
 5. The action resulting from this Decision will build upon the basis created by the achievements under the previous Council Decisions in support of SEESAC.
 6. A detailed description of the project is set out in the Annex to this Decision.

Article 2

1. The High Representative shall be responsible for implementing this Decision.
2. The technical implementation of the project referred to in Article 1 shall be carried out by SEESAC, where necessary in coordination with the Driver of the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT) Firearms.
3. SEESAC shall perform its tasks under the responsibility of the High Representative. For that purpose, the High Representative shall enter into the necessary arrangements with UNDP, which shall act on behalf of SEESAC.

Article 3

1. The financial reference amount for the implementation of the project financed by the Union referred to in Article 1 shall be EUR 4 002 587,52.
2. The expenditure financed by the reference amount set out in paragraph 1 shall be managed in accordance with the procedures and rules applicable to the Union budget.
3. The Commission shall supervise the proper management of the expenditure referred to in paragraph 2. For that purpose, it shall conclude the necessary agreement with UNDP, which shall act on behalf of SEESAC. The agreement shall stipulate that SEESAC has to ensure the visibility of the Union's contribution, appropriate to its size.
4. The Commission shall endeavour to conclude the agreement referred to in paragraph 3 as soon as possible after the entry into force of this Decision. It shall inform the Council of any difficulties in that process and of the date of conclusion of the agreement.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Article 4

1. The High Representative shall report to the Council on the implementation of this Decision on the basis of regular quarterly reports prepared by SEESAC. Those reports shall form the basis of the evaluation carried out by the Council.
2. The Commission shall report on the financial aspects of the project referred to in Article 1.

Article 5

1. This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.
2. This Decision shall expire 36 months after the date of conclusion of the agreement referred to in Article 3(3). However, it shall expire six months after the date of its entry into force if no agreement has been concluded within that period.

Done at Brussels, 19 November 2018.

For the Council
The President
F. MOGHERINI

ANNEX

UNION CONTRIBUTION TO THE SEESAC PROJECT ON SALW CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS
IN IMPLEMENTING THE ROADMAP FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION TO THE ILLEGAL POSSESSION, MISUSE AND
TRAFFICKING OF SALW/FIREARMS AND THEIR AMMUNITION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS**1. Introduction and objectives**

South-East Europe remains an area of concern and an important challenge in the EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition ('the EU SALW Strategy'). While significant progress has been made in recent years, the accumulation of small arms and light weapons ('SALW') and ammunition, inadequate storage conditions, illicit possession, and policy-making and implementation capacity gaps coupled with fragile political systems continue to limit the effectiveness of SALW control efforts. Therefore, in order to ensure continuous progress, secure the gains made and pave the way for a long-term sustainable solution that includes full harmonisation with the Union legislative and regulatory framework and compliance with international standards, the continuation of support to combat the threat posed by the spread and illicit trafficking of SALW in and from South-East Europe forms an essential part of the Union's efforts to achieve the goals of the EU SALW Strategy.

To address the remaining challenges in SALW control and reinforce the commitment of the Western Balkans in combating illicit trafficking and misuse of firearms, a Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024 ('the Roadmap') was developed by the SALW commissions of the Western Balkans on 29 May 2018 in Tirana, following a consultation process with relevant institutions and international organisations. It was endorsed in the framework of the Western Balkans Summit in London on 9 July 2018. The Roadmap envisions the Western Balkans as a safer region and an exporter of security, where comprehensive and sustainable oversight and control mechanisms, fully harmonised with Union and other international standards, are in place to identify, prevent, prosecute and control the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives. The Roadmap has been developed as a guiding document and, as such, envisages agreed levels of performance and outlines the commitment required at strategic, policy and operational level amongst the beneficiaries, building on the political commitment of the Western Balkans authorities to the UN and Union arms-control commitments and strategic documents.

The South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), as the executive arm of the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, supported the development of the Roadmap and will coordinate and support its implementation. This action will thus increase the assistance for SALW control provided by means of Council Decisions 2010/179/CFSP, 2013/730/CFSP and (CFSP) 2016/2356. It will advance further the processes and measures necessary for achieving sustainable SALW control in the Western Balkans.

This action will: (a) support the coordination of the Roadmap implementation; (b) provide support for the harmonisation of legislative and regulatory frameworks on SALW/firearms with those of the Union; and (c) enable a clear understanding of the current gaps and needs in order to improve further cross-border detection capacities with regard to illicit firearms trafficking by building on the establishment of the firearms focal points ('FFPs') in South-East Europe. It will also ensure a better overview of the current situation and identify areas for capacity support in preventing the illicit proliferation and trafficking of SALW/firearms in Ukraine and Belarus, building on the assistance provided under Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356 in support of reducing the threat of the illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW in South-East Europe (SEESAC IV). As such, the implementation of this action will complement the activities under Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356, allowing for the scaling-up of the impact on combating illicit trafficking of firearms. It will ensure the coordination of other actions and initiatives in the region concerning the fight against firearms trafficking, in order to exploit synergies, enhance interoperability and prevent duplication of effort. ⁽¹⁾

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to European and global peace and security by combating the threat posed by the accumulation of and illicit trafficking in SALW and their ammunition in and from

⁽¹⁾ The Action Plan on illicit trafficking in firearms between the EU and the South East Europe region for the period 2015–2019; Council conclusions on the implementation of an EU Policy cycle 2018–2021 for organised and serious international crime – EMPACT Firearms.

South-East Europe. At the same time, it will enhance regional stability by working within the framework of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and in partnership with other relevant international partners and initiatives.

The project will directly contribute to the implementation of the EU Security Strategy, the EU SALW Strategy, the EU Firearms Strategy, the Action Plan on illicit trafficking in firearms between the EU and the South East Europe region for the period 2015–2019 (‘the 2015–2019 Action Plan’), the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime, including the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT) Firearms, the Arms Trade Treaty, the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects, the International Tracing Instrument, the UN Firearms Protocol and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and will specifically enhance regional cooperation in combating the threat posed by the spread of SALW and their ammunition. The project results will also directly contribute the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peaceful and just societies, in particular targets 16.1 (significantly reduce all forms of violence and death rate everywhere) and 16.4 (significantly reduce illicit arms flows). In addition, the project will complement the implementation of the Commission Action Plan to target the illicit trafficking of firearms and explosives in the Union.

Specifically, the project will:

- coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans;
- support authorities in the Western Balkans in fully harmonising their arms-control legislation with the Union regulatory framework and other related international obligations; and
- provide support for countering illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus through capacity assessments and technical assistance to the law-enforcement and border-police authorities.

Building upon the successful implementation of Decision 2013/730/CFSP as well as Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356, and in line with the EU SALW Strategy, this follow-up project thus aims to further strengthen partners’ control systems and to continue to foster multilateralism by reinforcing well-established regional mechanisms for countering the supply and destabilising spread of SALW and their ammunition. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the capacities developed within South-East Europe institutions are shared with other geographic areas of concern, the project will provide for a more comprehensive regional dimension through targeted knowledge-transfer efforts.

2. Selection of implementing agency and coordination with other relevant funding initiatives

SEESAC is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the RCC, and as such is the focal point for SALW-related activities in South-East Europe. As the executive arm of the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of SALW, SEESAC has been working since 2002 with national and international stakeholders in South-East Europe on implementing a holistic approach to SALW control through the execution of a wide spectrum of activities including: the facilitation of strategic and operational regional cooperation, supporting policy development and capacity enhancement for institutions, awareness-raising and SALW collection campaigns, stockpile management, surplus reduction, and improved marking and tracing capabilities, as well as improved arms-exports control. In this way, SEESAC has acquired a unique capacity and experience implementing multi-stakeholder regional interventions against the shared political and economic background of the partners in the region, ensuring national and regional ownership and the long-term sustainability of its actions and establishing itself as the primary regional authority in the SALW control field.

SEESAC continues to maintain bilateral and multilateral channels of communication with all relevant actors and organisations. In that regard, SEESAC continues to serve as the Secretariat of the Regional Steering Group for SALW (RSG). In addition, SEESAC is the Secretariat of the Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction (RASR) initiative. SEESAC is also part of the SALW and mine action (‘MA’) coordination meetings, an informal coordination mechanism on SALW control activities involving NATO, the Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and SEESAC. SEESAC regularly contributes to relevant regional fora. SEESAC continues to maintain a wide network of formal and informal partnerships with organisations such as the Centre

for Security Cooperation of the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC) and the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC). Regular coordination meetings as well as information and data exchange with other UN agencies such as UNODC and UNODA take place through, inter alia, the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA). SEESAC thus serves as a regional hub and focal point for a wide spectrum of issues related to security-sector reform, with a particular focus on SALW control and stockpile management. SEESAC maintains close contact and provides support to relevant Union institutions for a more effective outreach to South-East Europe counterparts, primarily to DG Migration and Home Affairs of the Commission, and Europol, as well as Union-led initiatives such as EMPACT Firearms and the European Firearm Experts (EFE) group.

Based in Belgrade, SEESAC currently operates throughout South-East Europe, with activities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova, as well as limited support to Ukraine and Belarus. In the past, SEESAC also operated in Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania. Regional ownership is ensured through the RCC as well as through the RSG, where representatives of all partners in South-East Europe provide the strategic guidance, initiatives and requests for SEESAC activities.

SEESAC has pioneered an approach based on tackling shared problems through regional initiatives, which has yielded impressive results in South-East Europe not only because of the crucial information-sharing and promotion of healthy regional competition which it sparks, but also because it helps achieve consistent and easily measurable results at national and regional level through a holistic implementation modality. The organisation of the annual RSG meetings and participation by SEESAC in all relevant processes and initiatives provides timely and candid information exchange, strong situational awareness and the foresight necessary to ensure that implementation is not prone to overlap and is in line with the current needs of the governments and the regions as well as with developing trends.

SEESAC grounds all of its activities in counterparts' expressed needs and the collected baseline data, and secures endorsement and political support from national stakeholders as a precondition for action. In addition, all efforts are framed in support of Union-led processes and achievement of Union standards and criteria. SEESAC implemented its previous Union-funded projects with a very high delivery rate of the envisaged activities, delivering sustainable project results by developing and fostering partners' ownership of its projects and activities, and promoting regional coordination, experience and the sharing of best practices, as well as regional research. Its SALW expertise and in-depth knowledge of regional affairs and relevant stakeholders make SEESAC the most suitable implementing partner for this particular action.

The project also complements existing national and regional efforts, seeking maximum synergies. SEESAC will work in combination with the following international assistance efforts:

— in BiH:

- the Union project on stockpile management, technical support and ammunition surplus reduction (EU STAR), funded by the short-term component of the Union's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace and implemented by the UNDP office in Sarajevo; the EU STAR project builds upon the results and lessons learned from the EXPLODE project, which was funded by the Union and implemented by UNDP from April 2013 to November 2016, to continue supporting the establishment of a sustainable stockpile management system in BiH;
- the project funded by the German Federal Foreign Office focusing on countering illicit arms trafficking (CIAT), assisting the BiH border police as well as the BiH Ministry of Security in building their capacity to identify, prevent, and counter the trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives from and through BiH;
- the coordination mechanism set up by the BiH Ministry of Defence (MoD) and international actors under the coordination of EUFOR Althea in an effort to ensure continuous complementarity of action with the ongoing efforts of the international community to address the issue of surplus stocks of conventional ammunition held by the BiH MoD and in view of any possible future plans for a campaign to collect illegal conventional weapons in BiH.

To date, significant gains were achieved through tight cooperation and coordination with those three projects, which resulted in more efficient results;

- in Serbia, the conventional ammunition stockpile management (CASM) project, funded by the United States Department of State, UNDP and the OSCE, is designed to enhance the security and safety of predefined conventional ammunition storage locations and the disposal of reported surplus ammunition;
- in Montenegro, the Montenegro demilitarization (MONDEM) project, managed by UNDP in partnership with the OSCE, is designed to work on the reduction of counter-proliferation risks through the development of safe and secure conventional ammunition storage infrastructure and management systems, reduction of explosive risk to communities by environmentally benign demilitarisation, the destruction of toxic hazardous waste (liquid rocket propellant) and support for defence reform through the destruction of a limited quantity of heavy weapons systems designated by the MoD of Montenegro;
- in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the project on the reduction of the risk for proliferation of weapons and ammunition, which aims to increase the security of existing stockpiles of small arms and ammunition, and which is managed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and implemented by the OSCE mission to Skopje;
- in Kosovo, the firearms and explosives risk mitigation (FERM) project (formerly KOSSAC), which was designed initially to reduce armed violence in Kosovo and increase community safety, and which aims to support the Kosovo stakeholders in controlling the widespread illegal possession and circulation of SALW and, through risk-based management and an evidence-based approach, to minimise the risks of such weapons and explosive materials;
- regionally, the Regional Security Sector Reform Platform (RSSRP), a well-established resource that delivers quick, effective and demand-driven responses to rule-of-law needs at the technical level across the globe; with a quick deployment mechanism based on SEESAC's unique network of security experts with experience in the area of security-sector reform, RSSRP provides tailor-made assistance with a particular focus on SALW control and gender mainstreaming in security policy.

SEESAC regularly liaises with the OSCE, NATO, Europol, EMPACT and Interpol, as well as with other relevant actors, in order to secure complementarities of action, timeliness of intervention and cost-effectiveness in the use of resources.

3. Project description

The new phase of the SEESAC project will build upon the basis of the achievements under Decision 2013/730/CFSP and in complementarity with Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356.

It will focus on three main areas, maintaining the holistic approach to tackling the threat posed by SALW in the region. Those three areas address the strategic/policy level as well as the operational aspects, thus directly assisting at all levels of SALW control, with a focus on: closely coordinating the regional approach for the implementation of the Roadmap; strengthening capacities for the harmonisation of arms-control legislation; and contributing to a better understanding of the capacities to counter illicit trafficking for Ukraine and Belarus.

In particular, the project will result in:

- coordinated implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans;
- support provided for the full harmonisation of the Western Balkans authorities' arms-control legislation with the Union regulatory framework and other related international obligations, and standardisation across the region;
- countering illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus through capacity assessments and technical assistance to the law-enforcement and border-police authorities.

The project's strategy is grounded in SEESAC's unique approach of fostering confidence and cooperation in the region as a prerequisite for achieving concrete and measurable transformational change. In particular, at the

regional level, different cooperation processes facilitated by SEESAC, involving both policy-makers and operational-level practitioners, have proven to be an essential ingredient in ensuring an enabling and competitive environment for knowledge transfer, expertise exchange and information-sharing. This has served not only to increase the capacities in the region, but more importantly to build confidence and establish direct cooperation among institutions and individual experts, which, among other things, enabled the development of the Roadmap. In turn, the atmosphere of professional trust enables national-level progress on issues tackled by the Roadmap. In addition, the regional cooperation approach has made the region more transparent and efficient in its efforts to control the arms trade, with the result that the South-East Europe partners are among the most transparent globally in their reporting on arms transfers. Therefore, the project will continue to foster regional cooperation as the essential enabling element for measurable results.

The project's geographic scope is the Western Balkans, with direct project beneficiaries being Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In addition, the project will seek to further the support to Eastern European countries dealing with the similar SALW control challenges, such as the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, through the transfer of knowledge and experiences gained and best practices developed in the Western Balkans since 2001.

3.1. Coordination of the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW/firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans

Objective

To ensure the effective coordination of the implementation of the Roadmap by six beneficiaries and the accompanying six action plans developed with specific objectives and measured through key performance indicators ('KPIs'). Progress will be measured through a mechanism for monitoring, evaluating and reporting the results achieved in the implementation of the Roadmap and the partners' action plans for its implementation.

Description

The Western Balkans partners reconfirmed at the Western Balkans Summit in London on 9 July 2018 the common determination and reinforced commitment to put an end to illicit possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms through the endorsement of the Roadmap. The regional Roadmap, developed through a thorough consultative process and with SEESAC's support, complements existing Union activity to counter that threat, specifically the 2015–2019 Action Plan, the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative on elements towards an EU strategy against illicit firearms, SALW and their ammunition, and Europol's EMPACT work in the region. The Roadmap is a testimony to the consensus reached among all stakeholders in the region about the current challenges, the overall targets to be reached and the timeline of actions to be taken. It provides an overall platform for the achievement of commonly agreed KPIs at strategic, policy and operational level. As such, the work under this component will result in: an effective coordination of the implementation of the Roadmap at regional level; tailor-made support for SALW commissions and relevant authorities in the implementation of their Roadmap action plans; periodic monitoring and evaluation of progress against the jointly agreed KPIs; as well as a better understanding of the capacities of the beneficiaries to implement the actions under the functional areas of the Roadmap.

Specifically, the project envisages the coordination of the implementation of the Roadmap through:

- formal regional Roadmap coordination meetings focusing on taking stock of progress and information exchange;
- the provision of expert and technical support to local Roadmap coordination meetings monitoring the implementation of partners' action plans;
- the development of biannual monitoring and evaluation reports documenting progress, challenges and needs in the implementation of the Roadmap based on the commonly agreed KPIs;
- a mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Roadmap action plans, including capacity assessment for the six beneficiaries on SALW control;
- Roadmap outreach and visibility activities (including the establishment of an online platform, stakeholder engagement and awareness raising).

Project results/implementation indicators:

- Organisation of up to six regional Roadmap coordination meetings;
- Enabling taking stock of progress, information exchange, knowledge transfer and standardisation;
- Organisation of local coordination meetings (up to 36 in total);
- Development of biannual monitoring and evaluation reports (up to six);
- Mid-term evaluation, including capacity assessment prepared for six Roadmap beneficiaries;
- Establishment of an online platform to ensure proper outreach and visibility of the Roadmap.

3.2. Support to the authorities of the Western Balkans in fully harmonising their arms-control legislation with the Union regulatory framework and other related international obligations and standards across the region

Objective

This component will provide comprehensive technical support for the development and implementation of a strong legal framework for SALW control that is fully harmonised and in compliance with Union regulatory framework and other international agreements and standards.

Description

Goal 1 of the Roadmap aims to ensure that arms-control legislation in the Western Balkans is in place and fully harmonised with the Union regulatory framework and other related international obligations by 2023. There is an evident and urgent need for such a legislative and regulatory framework on SALW/firearms control in the Western Balkans to effectively regulate arms control and facilitate the response to relevant threats. This will consequently enable the compatibility of arms-control laws and procedures in the Western Balkans and the standardisation of SALW/firearms control procedures and practices. Such standardisation would allow for the removal of obstacles preventing law enforcement and the judiciary from cooperating directly, exchanging information and conducting joint or parallel investigations. It would also allow for a better and more efficient response to the firearm-related threats at national, regional and European level. Additionally, as the gender perspective is often neither recognised nor adequately addressed by legislative and policy frameworks regulating SALW control in South-East Europe, thereby making the arms-control efforts less efficient in providing security for all citizens, whether women, men, girls or boys, the project will contribute to the integration of the gender perspective in arms-control legislation.

Building upon the expert support provided to the authorities in the region through the implementation of Decision 2013/730/CFSP, this component will support the authorities in the region with a view to: providing a better understanding of the current baseline and gaps of the legal framework in the six beneficiaries; ensuring technical support for full harmonisation with the Union regulatory framework and other international agreements/standards; developing tailor-made national and regional thematic workshops; updating the regional arms-law compendium; carrying out a gender screening of the legal framework of the project beneficiaries in order to ensure that policies regulating arms control are not silent about the linkages between SALW and gender; and continuing the Gender Coach programme. The action will also provide support for strengthening the capacities of SALW commissions for outreach and advocacy through training on media strategy development.

It will do so through the:

- development of an assessment and gap analysis of partners' legal frameworks on SALW control and the level of harmonisation with Union and international legislation, as well as the level of standardisation of procedures in the region;
- provision of support for legislative standardisation and harmonisation through continuous and on-demand advisory support and the organisation of thematic workshops on arms laws, regulations and criminal codes at both regional and national level;
- updating of the regional arms-law compendium as an easy-reference guide for SALW/firearms control legislation in the region;
- carrying-out of a gender screening of the legal framework and the continuation of the Gender Coach programme;
- training on media strategy development.

Project results/implementation indicators:

- Assessment and gap analysis (six) of legal framework reports for each beneficiary;
- Up to three regional workshops and six thematic workshops for the beneficiaries;
- Provision of on-demand expertise on legislative and policy updates;
- Updated arms-law compendium translated into all of the relevant languages of the region;
- Gender-screening reports on the arms legal framework (six reports);
- Gender Coach programme with two heads of SALW commissions;
- Media strategy development and training.

3.3. Countering illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus through capacity assessments and technical assistance to the law-enforcement and border-police authorities

Objective

To reduce the threat of illicit trafficking of firearms by enhancing the capacities of law-enforcement and border police for further gathering, analysis and sharing of information.

Description

This component will assess the capabilities of the regional authorities to perform both preventive and repressive activities necessary to successfully identify, thwart and counter trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives from and through their jurisdiction. The assistance will focus on an in-depth assessment of the needs of the border authorities and criminal police human resources and equipment necessary for the appropriate functioning and performance. A pilot project will be implemented with a view to establishing the South-East Europe Ballistic Information Network, a cost-effective operational ballistic information-exchange structure linked directly to Europol and designed to automate collection and exchange of actionable ballistic information about existing cross-border firearm-related criminality, the prevention of further crime and the improvement of the strategic picture about the nature and patterns of gun crime.

The proposed activities will complement and be closely coordinated with the ongoing Union-supported actions in South-East Europe, primarily the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime and specifically the operational action plans of EMPACT Firearms, as well as the activities of Europol, Frontex and Interpol. Finally, the activities under this component will contribute to the implementation of the 2015–2019 Action Plan.

In addition, building upon the successful approach of including the authorities of the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus in the regional cooperation processes ongoing in South-East Europe, a number of SALW control needs have been already identified. In the interest of increasing the capacity for SALW control authorities in the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus to combat crime in general and SALW/firearms proliferation and trafficking in particular, this component will assess critical SALW control areas in those jurisdictions, thus paving the way for targeted interventions to address the threat posed by illicit trafficking of SALW.

Main activities envisaged:

- Needs assessment of the border-police and criminal-police services of the Western Balkans in countering illicit arms trafficking;
- Building on the current work on the establishment of the FFPs through practical support for information-exchange capabilities, in particular with regard to ballistic evidence, as well as the procurement of specialised equipment in support of the FFPs;
- Assessment of the capacities of the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus for selected aspects of SALW, ammunition and explosives control as well as combating illicit trafficking of firearms, focusing, inter alia, on legal and policy frameworks, physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) capabilities, border control, the criminal police and the judicial response to trafficking and the misuse of firearms. The detailed assessment will identify opportunities, threats and challenges, with recommendations for possible targeted interventions to address the threat posed by illicit trafficking of SALW.

Project results/implementation indicators:

- Needs assessment of the border-police and criminal-police services of the Western Balkans in countering illicit arms trafficking;
- Strengthened capacity of ballistics experts and investigators for addressing cross-border firearm-related criminality;
- Implemented pilot on operational ballistic information-exchange structure;
- Assessment of capacities of the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus for selected aspects of SALW control with identified targeted interventions.

4. **Beneficiaries**

The direct beneficiaries of the project will be the institutions responsible for SALW control in the Western Balkans. The authorities for home affairs, police services, border guards and customs authorities of the Republic of Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova will benefit from capacity development, knowledge advancement, improved procedures and cost-effective specialised equipment necessary for policy, operational and technical advancements in SALW control. Finally, SALW commissions and other institutions responsible for the control of SALW in South-East Europe will benefit from training and information-sharing as well as regional cooperation. In addition, key institutions tasked with SALW control in the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus will benefit from a better understanding of the illicit firearms trafficking threat and targeted knowledge transfer.

The proposed activities are fully in line with the Roadmap, as well as partners' priorities on SALW control and have been endorsed by the relevant partners' SALW control authorities, demonstrating their buy-in and commitment for the achievement of project results.

The general population of the countries in Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Union, at risk from the widespread proliferation of SALW, will benefit from this project as the risk decreases.

5. **Union visibility**

SEESAC shall take all appropriate measures to publicise the fact that the action has been funded by the Union. Such measures will be carried out in accordance with the Commission's Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Actions. SEESAC will thus ensure the visibility of the Union's contribution with appropriate branding and publicity, highlighting the role of the Union, ensuring the transparency of its actions and raising awareness of the reasons for the Decision as well as Union support for the Decision and the results of this support. Material produced by the project will prominently display the European Union flag in accordance with Union guidelines for the accurate use and reproduction of the flag.

Given that planned activities vary greatly in scope and character, a range of promotional tools will be used, including: traditional media; websites; social media; and informational and promotional materials including infographics, leaflets, newsletters, press releases and others, as appropriate. Publications, public events, campaigns, equipment and construction works procured under the project will be branded accordingly. To further amplify the impact by raising awareness among various national governments and the public, the international community and local and international media, each of the project target groups will be addressed using the appropriate language. Particular focus will be placed on new media and online presence.

6. **Duration**

Based on the experience of implementing Decisions 2010/179/CFSP and 2013/730/CFSP, and taking into consideration the regional scope of the project, the number of beneficiaries and the number and the complexity of planned activities, the timeframe for implementation is 36 months.

7. **General set-up**

The technical implementation of this action has been entrusted to UNDP, acting on behalf of SEESAC, the regional initiative working under the mandate of UNDP and the RCC. As the executive arm of the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of SALW, SEESAC acts as focal point for all SALW-related issues in the South-East Europe region, including facilitating coordination of the implementation of the regional Roadmap.

UNDP, acting on behalf of SEESAC, will have the overall responsibility for the implementation of project activities and accountability for project implementation. The project duration is three years (36 months).

8. Partners

SEESAC will directly implement the action in close cooperation with SALW commissions as well as with the authorities for home affairs of Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova, and relevant institutions in Ukraine and Belarus. Other institutions will be closely involved in line with the established multi-stakeholder holistic approach to SALW control.

9. Reporting

Reporting, narrative as well as financial, shall cover the whole of the action described in the relevant contribution-specific agreement and its attached budget, regardless of whether this action is wholly financed or co-financed by the Commission.

On a quarterly basis, narrative progress reports shall be submitted to record and monitor progress towards the completion of key results.

10. Estimated budget

The total estimated cost of the Union-financed project is EUR 4 002 587,52.

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2018/1789**of 19 November 2018****in support of combating the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Member States of the League of Arab States**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Articles 28(1) and 31(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

- (1) On 16 December 2005 the European Council adopted the EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition ('the EU SALW Strategy'), subsequently revised in 2018, which set the guidelines for Union action in the field of small arms and light weapons ('SALW'). The EU SALW Strategy noted that the Union will, as a priority, support regional initiatives to combat illicit SALW and their ammunition, providing financial and technical support for regional and national organisations responsible for implementing relevant regional instruments.
- (2) On 13 June 2018 the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy ('the High Representative') presented a Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on elements towards an EU strategy against illicit firearms, SALW and their ammunition entitled 'Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens'.
- (3) The United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted on 25 September 2015, affirmed that sustainable development cannot be realised without peace and security and that illicit arms flows are amongst the factors which give rise to violence, insecurity and injustice.
- (4) In his Agenda for Disarmament entitled 'Securing our Common Future', which was launched on 24 May 2018, the UN Secretary-General calls for an inclusive, integrated and participatory approach to small-arms control at country level and, in some situations, at the subregional level.
- (5) At the third UN conference to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA), held in June 2018, UN Member States undertook to strengthen, as appropriate, partnerships and cooperation at all levels in preventing and combating the illicit trade in SALW, in particular on border control; stockpile management and security; destruction and disposal; marking, record-keeping and tracing; and illicit brokering. They also undertook to strengthen cooperation with relevant subregional and regional organisations in strengthening the implementation of the PoA and the International Tracing Instrument.
- (6) The League of Arab States (LAS) is a regional organisation bringing together all Arab countries, with the purpose of promoting and strengthening cooperation among its members.
- (7) In 2016 the Union and the LAS set up the EU-LAS Strategic Dialogue and established a number of working groups.
- (8) The Strategic Dialogue Working Group on Weapons of Mass Destruction and Arms Control has defined priority areas for possible concrete cooperation,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

1. With a view to supporting the LAS Member States with their national implementation of the UN PoA and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), the Union will pursue the following objectives:

- sustainably build the national capacity of LAS Member States to combat the illicit proliferation of SALW, combat terrorism and enhance security in post-conflict situations while fully respecting international human rights standards,
- sustainably build the regional capacity of the LAS to address the same challenges,

- strengthen LAS Member States' national control over SALW at key stages of their life cycle,
 - enhance the exchange of best practices and lessons learned.
2. In order to achieve the objectives referred to in paragraph 1, the Union shall, by means of this Decision, support actions in the following areas:
- international SALW transfer control (combating illicit arms flows),
 - identification and disruption of sources of illicit small arms (capacity-building for law-enforcement agencies),
 - other measures related to small-arms control, including stockpile management, control of related supplies and security,
 - disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR),
 - provision of information relevant to illicit SALW and enhanced SALW control.
3. A detailed description of the project referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 is set out in the Annex to this Decision.

Article 2

1. The High Representative shall be responsible for the implementation of this Decision.
2. The technical implementation of the project referred to in Article 1 shall be carried out by the Small Arms Survey ("SAS"), represented by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, with the assistance of the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) and the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and in close cooperation with the LAS Secretariat.
3. SAS, assisted by Interpol and the WCO, shall perform its tasks under the responsibility of the High Representative. For that purpose, the High Representative shall enter into the necessary arrangements with SAS.

Article 3

1. The financial reference amount for the implementation of the project financed by the Union referred to in Article 1 shall be EUR 2 858 550.
2. The expenditure financed by the reference amount set out in paragraph 1 shall be managed in accordance with the procedures and rules applicable to the Union budget.
3. The Commission shall supervise the proper management of the expenditure referred to in paragraph 2. For that purpose, it shall conclude the necessary agreement with SAS. The agreement shall stipulate that SAS has to ensure the visibility of the Union's contribution, appropriate to its size.
4. The Commission shall endeavour to conclude the agreement referred to in paragraph 3 as soon as possible after the entry into force of this Decision. It shall inform the Council of any difficulties in that process and of the date of conclusion of the agreement.

Article 4

1. The High Representative shall report to the Council on the implementation of this Decision on the basis of regular quarterly reports prepared by SAS. Those reports shall form the basis of the evaluation carried out by the Council.
2. The Commission shall report on the financial aspects of the project referred to in Article 1.

Article 5

1. This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

2. This Decision shall expire 24 months after the date of conclusion of the agreement referred to in Article 3(3). However, it shall expire six months after the date of its entry into force if no agreement has been concluded within that period.

Done at Brussels, 19 November 2018.

For the Council

The President

F. MOGHERINI

ANNEX

Combating the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Member States of the League of Arab States (2018-2020)

1. Background and rationale for CFSP support

This project will build on earlier efforts undertaken by the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Union to assist LAS Member States in combating illicit small arms and light weapons ('SALW') in the Arab region. The eradication of illicit small arms in the Arab region is crucial to reducing all forms of violence and promoting sustainable development and prosperity in line with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — both in the Arab region and in neighbouring regions, including Europe.

More specifically, the project aims at strengthening the capacity of LAS Member States to implement the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) according to the priorities and needs identified by LAS Member States. The normative framework for the project also comprises the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular target 16.4. Depending on the preferences of the host LAS Member State, the UN Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty could also serve as reference points for project-related capacity-building efforts (export/import control, diversion prevention, etc.).

2. Project objectives and long-term sustainability

The underlying goal of the project is to sustainably strengthen the capacity of LAS Member States to implement the PoA and the ITI, including for the purpose of combating illicit small arms and terrorism, according to the priorities and needs identified by LAS Member States. To achieve this goal, the project has the following main objectives:

- (a) sustainably build the national capacity of LAS Member States to combat the illicit proliferation of SALW, combat terrorism and enhance security in post-conflict situations;
- (b) sustainably build the regional capacity of the LAS to address the same challenges;
- (c) strengthen LAS Member States' national control over SALW at key stages of their life cycle;
- (d) enhance the exchange of best practices and lessons learned.

Consultations with LAS Member States indicate that they seek assistance and support in specific areas, with an overriding focus on the building of national capacity to combat illicit arms flows (see section 3 for further details). All of the project's components, including those relating to needs assessment and post-implementation evaluation, are in fact designed to ensure that the project imparts sustainable capacity to its intended beneficiaries, namely government institutions and officials in LAS Member States, as well as the LAS Secretariat (Arms Control and Disarmament Department).

3. Description of action

The Union project to combat the illicit trade in and proliferation of SALW in LAS Member States (2018-2020) is designed to respond to the needs that LAS Member States have expressed in the following priority areas:

Area 1:

International SALW transfer control (combating illicit arms flows)

- 1.1. Export/import/transit licensing and control (risk assessment, etc.)
- 1.2. Preventing the diversion of SALW to unauthorised recipients
- 1.3. Detecting SALW and their parts during the inspection of transported goods and cargo (inspection methods, techniques and equipment, etc.)

Area 2:

Identification and disruption of sources of illicit small arms (capacity-building for law-enforcement agencies)

- 2.1. Control of land, air and maritime borders, including technology transfer
- 2.2. Marking, record-keeping and tracing
- 2.3. Additional techniques and methods for arms investigation and inspection (use of ballistics information, identification/disruption of smuggling routes and methods, etc.)

Area 3:

Other small-arms control measures

- 3.1. Stockpile management and security

Area 4:

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)

- 4.1. Exchanging DDR expertise, best practices and lessons learned
- 4.2. Assistance in designing national DDR programmes
- 4.3. Other forms of support to LAS Member States during a post-conflict phase

Note that this component, while requested by some LAS Member States, received less interest overall than the other areas listed in this section. For this reason, it is not the focus of the project.

Area 5:

Provision of information relevant to illicit SALW and enhanced SALW control:

- 5.1. Evaluation of the laws and regulations of LAS Member States; advising on possible amendments and revisions.
- 5.2. Translation of relevant research, published studies and other documents into Arabic

In responding to the above needs, the project will comprise the following elements:

1. Regional coordination: Cairo inception meeting
 2. Subregional coordination: subregional workshops
 3. Assessment missions
 4. In-country training
 5. Legislative assistance
 6. Provision of information in Arabic
 7. Regional coordination: wrap-up meeting in Cairo
 8. Project monitoring and evaluation (including a financial audit)
- 3.1. Regional coordination: Cairo inception meeting
 - 3.1.1. Objective: Raise awareness of the project, initiate contact with LAS Member States and begin to identify specific country needs (initial needs assessment) (priority areas 1 to 5).
 - 3.1.2. Activities: One-week inception meeting in Cairo, covering all aspects of the project (priority areas 1 to 5), aimed at senior LAS Member State officials, as well as LAS staff responsible for project-related issues.
 - 3.1.3. Results of the action: establishment of contact with LAS Member States; identification of specific country needs; production of summary meeting report.

3.2. Subregional coordination: subregional workshops

3.2.1. Objective: At subregional level, allow LAS Member States to share experiences and good practices and identify implementation priorities in areas relating to the project (priority areas 1 to 4).

3.2.2. Activities: One-week workshops held, approximately midway through the project, in three different subregions (tentatively: Maghreb, Arab Sahel and Eastern Africa; Mashreq; Arabian Peninsula and Iraq) (three weeks total). The LAS Member States participating in each of the workshops would be determined at the Cairo inception meeting (point 3.1) or shortly thereafter.

3.2.3. Results of the action: exchange of experiences and good practices in areas relating to the project; identification of implementation priorities; production of summary workshop report.

3.3. Assessment missions

3.3.1. Objective: Ascertain specific country needs and prepare for follow-up in-country training and assistance (priority areas 1 to 5).

3.3.2. Activities: Field visits to LAS Member States requesting assistance.

3.3.3. Results of the action: Completion of assessment missions; production of a short report for each mission, confidential to the host LAS Member State, aimed at determining its specific needs (identification of existing policies and measures, normative or other gaps, and barriers to addressing such gaps).

3.4. In-country training

3.4.1. Objective: Build sustainable capacity for small-arms control in the host LAS Member State according to that State's interests and needs (priority areas 1 to 4).

3.4.2. Activities

In-country training sessions for LAS Member States requesting assistance. The training sessions could benefit all 22 LAS Member States (one week per State) or a smaller number of LAS Member States (multiple visits to those States, e.g. two weeks of training for 11 LAS Member States).

Each one-week training session will involve: (a) an opening day introducing senior government officials to all aspects of the project that are of interest/relevance to the LAS Member State; (b) two days' training of front-line managers (project experts working in parallel on the issue areas of interest/relevance to the LAS Member State); (c) two days' practical training of field personnel (project experts working in parallel on the issue areas of interest/relevance to the LAS Member State).

In the case of multiple visits, the project would seek to enhance national ownership by expanding and strengthening training provided during the first visit, especially in the areas identified by the host LAS Member State as top priorities.

3.4.3. Results of the action: The impact of the training sessions would be assessed in order to determine the extent to which project capacity-building objectives have been met.

3.5. Legislative assistance

3.5.1. Objective: Assess small-arms-related legislation in LAS Member States requesting such assistance; identify possible legislative amendments and revisions (priority areas 1 to 4).

3.5.2. Activities: desk-based research and liaison with the requesting LAS Member State; field visit (one-week); and follow-up report and liaison with the requesting LAS Member State.

3.5.3. Results of the action: Production of a short report, confidential to the host LAS Member State, identifying possible legislative amendments and revisions.

- 3.6. Provision of information in Arabic
 - 3.6.1. Objective: Meet the needs of LAS Member States for independent and reliable information on small arms and armed violence in Arabic (priority area 5)
 - 3.6.2. Activities: Translation of key publications and documents into Arabic (published reports, best-practice guidelines, etc.). Examples could include the Small Arms Survey's Guide to the UN Small Arms Process and its Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) Matrix.
 - 3.6.3. Results of the action: Specific outputs would include the translation of important books, reports and briefing papers, as well as the production of podcasts and blog posts in Arabic. This action would result in a significant increase in the availability of independent and reliable Arabic-language information on small arms and armed violence.
- 3.7. Regional coordination: wrap-up meeting in Cairo
 - 3.7.1. Objective: Evaluate the project and plan for future cooperation (priority areas 1 to 5).
 - 3.7.2. Activities: Two-day meeting held in Cairo at the end of the project, aimed at senior LAS Member State officials and LAS staff responsible for project-related issues.
 - 3.7.3. Results of the action: Discussion and evaluation of the project; elaboration of plans for future cooperation on small-arms control; production of a summary meeting report.
- 3.8. Project monitoring and evaluation
 - 3.8.1. Objective: To ensure that the project has met its substantive objectives, and that project expenditures have been made in accordance with the agreed budget.
 - 3.8.2. Activities: In order to measure the impacts of the various project components, the project will include both an internal and an external monitoring mechanism. The internal monitoring mechanism will be led by the resident results-based management (RBM) specialist, supported by project staff. The external evaluation will involve the recruitment of an external evaluation team that will travel to the two-day meeting in Cairo at the end of the project, selected participating LAS Member States (up to 8) and the headquarters of the main project implementers — the Small Arms Survey, the International Criminal Police Organization and the World Customs Organization. The project will also include a financial audit in line with Union requirements.
 - 3.8.3. Results of the action: Completion of an assessment of project impacts; completion of the financial audit.
4. Implementing agencies and partnerships

The Small Arms Survey ('SAS'), a research centre located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, will be the lead implementing agency. In implementing the project, SAS will draw, in particular, on the contributions of the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) and the World Customs Organisation (WCO). Interpol will have primary responsibility for priority areas 2.2 and 2.3 (capacity-building for law-enforcement agencies), the WCO for priority areas 1 and 2.1 (international transfer controls, including border controls).

As necessary, SAS will subcontract other organisations to assist with other components of the project (possibly including the component on stockpile management and security). Depending on the needs and preferences of participating LAS Member States, other organisations, including civil-society organisations, as well as certain LAS specialised agencies, could also contribute to the implementation of the project.

The implementing agencies will also coordinate with governmental and non-governmental organisations working in LAS Member States, as well as any Union programmes with a presence there, in order to ensure that all of the activities undertaken within the framework of the project complement and build upon existing initiatives.

SAS and its implementing partners will also take appropriate measures to ensure project visibility in line with Union guidelines.

5. Duration

A duration of 24 months is envisaged for the project. Depending on LAS Member State interest and available funding, an extension of the project beyond the initial two-year period would allow for the continuation and consolidation of the capacity-building efforts undertaken in the project's initial phase. For example, training provided to a given LAS Member State in the initial phase could be repeated, expanded and tested, involving a broader range of personnel, in order to ensure sustainability. LAS Member States that did not receive all of the training or legislative assistance they sought in the first phase of the project could receive it in the second. LAS Member States that identified new arms-control needs or priorities — building, for example, on capacities acquired in the first phase of the project — could receive assistance in these areas in the second phase.

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2018/1790**of 16 November 2018****repealing Decision 2002/623/EC establishing guidance notes on the environmental risk assessment of genetically modified organisms***(notified under document C(2018) 7513)***(Text with EEA relevance)**

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 March 2001 on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms and repealing Council Directive 90/220/EEC ⁽¹⁾, and in particular the first paragraph of Annex II thereto,

Whereas:

- (1) Commission Decision 2002/623/EC ⁽²⁾ established guidance notes on the objectives, elements, general principles and methodology of the environmental risk assessment referred to in Annex II to Directive 2001/18/EC.
- (2) Extensive supplementary explanations regarding the implementation of Annex II to Directive 2001/18/EC have been given in more recent and more detailed guidance documents on the environmental risk assessment of genetically modified organisms ('GMOs') adopted by the European Food Safety Authority ('the Authority') and by the European Medicines Agency ('the Agency'). After the adoption of those more detailed guidance documents, Decision 2002/623/EC has progressively lost its added value.
- (3) Commission Directive (EU) 2018/350 ⁽³⁾, which amended Directive 2001/18/EC, updated Annex II to Directive 2001/18/EC by incorporating and building upon the strengthened guidance of the Authority on the environmental risk assessment of genetically modified plants, adopted in October 2010 ⁽⁴⁾, while taking into account that Annex II applies to all GMOs and not only to genetically modified plants. Decision 2002/623/EC itself served as a basis for the elaboration of the guidance of the Authority. As a result, the provisions of Annex II to Directive 2001/18/EC are now more detailed and the guidance notes established by Decision 2002/623/EC are no longer needed.
- (4) Decision 2002/623/EC should therefore be repealed.
- (5) Decision 2002/623/EC should also be repealed in the interest of simplification in order to reduce the number of guidance documents that must be taken into account by operators and competent authorities when carrying out an environmental risk assessment under Annex II to Directive 2001/18/EC.
- (6) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee established under Article 30(1) of Directive 2001/18/EC,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Decision 2002/623/EC is repealed.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 106, 17.4.2001, p. 1.⁽²⁾ Commission Decision 2002/623/EC of 24 July 2002 establishing guidance notes supplementing Annex II to Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms and repealing Council Directive 90/220/EEC (OJ L 200, 30.7.2002, p. 22).⁽³⁾ Commission Directive (EU) 2018/350 of 8 March 2018 amending Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the environmental risk assessment of genetically modified organisms (OJ L 67, 9.3.2018, p. 30).⁽⁴⁾ EFSA Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO); Guidance on the environmental risk assessment of genetically modified plants. *EFSA Journal* 2010; 8(11):1879. [111 pp.]. doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2010.1879.

Article 2

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels, 16 November 2018.

For the Commission
Vytenis ANDRIUKAITIS
Member of the Commission

POLITICAL AND SECURITY COMMITTEE DECISION (CFSP) 2018/1791
of 6 November 2018

on the appointment of the EU Mission Force Commander of the European Union military mission to contribute to the training of the Malian Armed Forces (EUTM Mali) (EUTM Mali/2/2018)

THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY COMMITTEE,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 38 thereof,

Having regard to Council Decision 2013/34/CFSP of 17 January 2013 on a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of the Malian Armed Forces (EUTM Mali) ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 5 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Pursuant to Article 5(1) of Decision 2013/34/CFSP, the Council authorised the Political and Security Committee (PSC) to take the relevant decisions concerning the political control and strategic direction of EUTM Mali, including the decisions on the appointment of subsequent EU Mission Force Commanders for EUTM Mali.
- (2) On 23 January 2018, the PSC adopted Decision (CFSP) 2018/135 ⁽²⁾ appointing Brigadier General Enrique MILLÁN MARTÍNEZ as EU Mission Force Commander of EUTM Mali.
- (3) On 5 October 2018, Germany proposed the appointment of Brigadier General Peter MIROW to succeed Brigadier General Enrique MILLÁN MARTÍNEZ as the EU Mission Force Commander of EUTM Mali as from 12 November 2018.
- (4) On 5 October 2018, the EU Military Committee supported that recommendation.
- (5) A decision on the appointment of Brigadier General Peter MIROW should therefore be taken. Decision (CFSP) 2018/135 should be repealed.
- (6) In accordance with Article 5 of Protocol No 22 on the position of Denmark, annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Denmark does not participate in the elaboration and the implementation of decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications. Consequently, Denmark is not participating in the adoption of this Decision and is neither bound by it nor subject to its application,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Brigadier General Peter MIROW is hereby appointed as the EU Mission Force Commander of the European Union military mission to contribute to the training of the Malian Armed Forces (EUTM Mali) as from 12 November 2018.

Article 2

Decision (CFSP) 2018/135 is hereby repealed.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 14, 18.1.2013, p. 19.

⁽²⁾ Political and Security Committee Decision (CFSP) 2018/135 of 23 January 2018 on the appointment of the EU Mission Force Commander of the European Union military mission to contribute to the training of the Malian Armed Forces (EUTM Mali) (EUTM Mali/1/2018) (OJ L 24, 27.1.2018, p. 1).

Article 3

This Decision shall enter into force on 12 November 2018.

Done at Brussels, 6 November 2018.

For the Political and Security Committee
The Chairperson
S. FROM-EMMESBERGER

DECISION OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE
of 16 October 2018
on the lodging and service of procedural documents by means of e-Curia

THE COURT OF JUSTICE,

Having regard to the Rules of Procedure and, in particular, Articles 48(4) and 57(8) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to take account of developments in communication technology, an information technology application has been developed to allow the lodging and service of procedural documents by electronic means.
- (2) This application, which is based on an electronic authentication system using a combination of a personal user identification and password, meets the requirements of authenticity, integrity and confidentiality of documents exchanged.
- (3) In view of the success of this application and the advantages it offers, notably in terms of the rapidity with which documents are exchanged, it is appropriate to widen the circle of its beneficiaries and to give the courts and tribunals of the Member States the opportunity to lodge or to receive procedural documents using this application when the Court is dealing with requests for a preliminary ruling.
- (4) In the interests of the proper administration of justice — and for the purposes of dealing with references for a preliminary ruling only — the same opportunity must be given to persons who are not agents or lawyers but who are nevertheless authorised, under national procedural rules, to represent a party before the courts or tribunals of their own State,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Definition

The information technology application known as 'e-Curia', common to the constituent courts of the Court of Justice of the European Union, allows the lodging and service of procedural documents by electronic means under the conditions laid down by this Decision.

Article 2

Access to the application

Use of this application shall require the opening of an access account and use of a personal user identification and password.

Article 3

Lodging of a procedural document

A procedural document lodged by means of e-Curia shall be deemed to be the original of that document for the purposes of Article 57(1) of the Rules of Procedure where the personal user identification and password of a party's representative or of a person acting on behalf of a court or tribunal of a Member State have been used to effect the lodging. Use of that user identification and of that password shall constitute the signature of the document concerned.

Article 4

Annexes and copies

A procedural document lodged by means of e-Curia must be accompanied by the annexes referred to therein and a schedule listing such annexes.

It shall not be necessary to lodge certified copies of a document lodged by means of e-Curia or of any annexes thereto.

*Article 5***Date and time of lodging**

A procedural document shall be deemed to have been lodged for the purposes of Article 57(7) of the Rules of Procedure at the time of validation of the lodging of that document by the party's representative or by the person acting on behalf of the court or tribunal concerned.

The relevant time shall be the time in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

*Article 6***Service of procedural documents**

Procedural documents, including judgments and orders, shall be served by means of e-Curia on the holders of e-Curia accounts who, in a case, represent a party or act on behalf of a court or tribunal of a Member State, as well as on their assistants, if any.

Procedural documents shall also be served by means of e-Curia on Member States, other States which are parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area and institutions, bodies, offices or agencies of the Union that have accepted this method of service.

Procedural documents may also be served in accordance with the other methods of transmission provided for by the Rules of Procedure if required because of the size or nature of the item or where the use of e-Curia is not possible for technical reasons.

*Article 7***Date and time of service**

The intended recipients of the documents served referred to in Article 6 shall be notified by email of any document served on them by means of e-Curia.

A procedural document shall be served at the time when the intended recipient requests access to that document. In the absence of any request for access, the document shall be deemed to have been served on the expiry of the seventh day following the day on which the notification email was sent.

Where a party is represented by more than one person or where several persons are authorised to act on behalf of a court or tribunal of a Member State, the time to be taken into account in the reckoning of time limits shall be the time when the first request for access was made.

The relevant time shall be the time in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

*Article 8***Conditions of use of the application**

The Registrar shall draw up the conditions of use of e-Curia and ensure that they are observed. Any use of e-Curia contrary to those conditions may result in the deactivation of the access account concerned.

The Court shall take the necessary steps to protect e-Curia from any abuse or malicious use.

Users shall be notified by email of any action taken pursuant to this Article that prevents them from using their access account.

*Article 9***Repeal**

This decision repeals and replaces the decision of the Court of Justice of 13 September 2011 on the lodging and service of procedural documents by means of e-Curia. ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 289, 1.10.2011, p. 7.

*Article 10***Entry into force**

This decision shall enter into force on the first day of the month following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Luxembourg, 16 October 2018.

A. CALOT ESCOBAR
The Registrar

K. LENAERTS
The President

ACTS ADOPTED BY BODIES CREATED BY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

DECISION No 1/2018 OF THE EU-TUNISIA ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

of 9 November 2018

adopting the EU-Tunisia strategic priorities for the period 2018-2020 [2018/1792]

THE EU-TUNISIA ASSOCIATION COUNCIL,

Having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Tunisia, of the other part ⁽¹⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) The Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Tunisia, of the other part ('Euro-Mediterranean Agreement') was signed on 17 July 1995 and entered into force on 1 March 1998.
- (2) Article 80 of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement gives the Association Council the power to take decisions it considers appropriate for the purposes of attaining the objectives of the Agreement.
- (3) In accordance with Article 90 of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, the parties are to take any general or specific measures required to fulfil their obligations under the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement and are to see to it that the objectives set out therein are attained.
- (4) The review of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2016 proposed a new phase of engagement with partners, allowing for a greater sense of ownership by both sides.
- (5) The European Union and the Republic of Tunisia have decided to consolidate their privileged partnership by agreeing on a set of strategic priorities for the period 2018-2020 with the aim of supporting and strengthening the democratic transition and the socioeconomic development of Tunisia.
- (6) The parties to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement should agree on the text of the strategic priorities, which translate the EU-Tunisia privileged partnership into practice for the period 2018-2020. Those priorities should support the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, focusing on cooperation in relation to commonly identified shared interests,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The Association Council adopts the EU-Tunisia strategic priorities for the period 2018-2020 as set out in the document: 'Strengthening the EU-Tunisia privileged partnership: strategic priorities for the period 2018-2020' set out in the Annex and recommends that the parties implement them.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 97, 30.3.1998, p. 2.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels, 9 November 2018.

For the EU-Tunisia Association Council

The President

F. MOGHERINI

ANNEX

Strengthening the EU-Tunisia privileged partnership: the strategic priorities for the period 2018-2020

1. Introduction

Tunisia made a strategic choice in anchoring itself to the European area, and the development of a prosperous and stable Tunisian democracy within the neighbourhood of the EU is of mutual strategic interest.

The EU-Tunisia privileged partnership testifies to the special and dynamic bilateral relations that have been established, and the shared ambition to advance towards increasingly close links between Tunisia and the European area. The long-term objective is to develop an ambitious framework for future relations post-2020, building on the progress achieved and making full use of the opportunities for closer links provided by the European Neighbourhood Policy in the period 2018-2020.

In the context of the privileged partnership, Tunisia is fully committed to implementing the reforms necessary for the sustainable socioeconomic development of the country and to ensure long-term progress in the democratic transition. Realising the scale of the challenge and the difficulties Tunisia is going through, the European Union reiterates its commitment to supporting implementation of these reforms as soon as possible.

The strategic priorities developed in this document translate the privileged partnership into practical terms for the period 2018 to 2020. The creation of future prospects for young people will be at the core of the actions of both sides. The focus will be placed on speeding up socioeconomic reforms including improvement of the business environment, and the conclusion of a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement (DCFTA). Democratic consolidation, in particular effective implementation of the 2014 Constitution and good governance will also remain essential. Both sides will reinforce cooperation in the field of security and counter-terrorism, and in relation to migration and mobility with the completion of negotiations on visa facilitation and on readmission, and the increasingly active participation of Tunisia in EU programmes. Enhancing high-level political dialogue and dialogue with civil society and also the visibility of the partnership will go hand in hand with these efforts.

These priorities are based on the Tunisian 2016-2020 Five-Year Development Plan ⁽¹⁾ and the Joint Communication Strengthening EU support for Tunisia ⁽²⁾.

2. Strategic priorities of the EU-Tunisia privileged partnership for the period 2018-2020

Partnership for youth

The EU and Tunisia consider enhancing young people's prospects for the future to be a major objective, as shown by the EU-Tunisia partnership for youth launched by the Tunisian President and the High Representative/Vice-President on 1 December 2016. In order to respond better to the needs of young Tunisians, the various ongoing and future actions should be more consistent. On the basis of the dialogue launched for implementing this partnership, the EU and Tunisia have undertaken to consolidate measures to promote youth employment and employability, mobility, and increased participation of young people in public life and politics, in particular in local initiatives. Employability will require the reform of education and vocational training, the creation of closer links between the private sector and educational and training systems, and the promotion of and support for innovative initiatives launched by young people, particularly in the areas of new technologies and culture. Support for the development of a Tunisian national strategy for youth will be a key element of the partnership, as will be strengthening institutions and organisations dedicated to youth.

⁽¹⁾ This plan advocates a new development model for sustainable and inclusive growth and is structured around five priorities: (i) good governance, public administration reform and the fight against corruption, (ii) transition from a low-cost economy to an economic hub, (iii) human development and social inclusion, (iv) realisation of regional ambitions, and (v) the green economy, which is a pillar of sustainable development.

⁽²⁾ This Communication from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council (JOIN (2016)47 final of 29 September 2016) is based on five priorities: (i) promoting good governance and public administration reform; (ii) reinforcing the role played by civil society; (iii) investing in the future: creating jobs and fostering sustainable economic development; (iv) reducing disparities throughout society; (v) support in tackling security challenges; (vi) joint efforts for better management of migration and mobility.

Complementing this commitment to youth, both sides will work on the following strategic priorities:

2.1. Inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic development

Tunisia's political progress can only be sustained if it is accompanied by economic progress on a similar scale. In view of Tunisia's fragile socioeconomic situation, with high youth unemployment (especially among the educated) and significant regional and social disparities, one of the key objectives will be to contribute to turning round the Tunisian economy, to making it more competitive and diversified and to transforming it in an inclusive and sustainable fashion, with due regard for international commitments on the environment and climate change. The EU will continue to support and encourage structural reforms.

More particularly, measures in the area of socioeconomic development will be organised around the following commitments:

- improving the business climate and supporting the development of the private sector and private investment, in particular through: (i) simplification and streamlining of administrative procedures for businesses, (ii) improving access to finance, and (iii) boosting public and private investment – in particular effective implementation of the 2016 law on investment and the 2017 law recasting tax benefits, taking account of harmful arrangements as regards abolition of tax advantages;
- there will also be an emphasis on actively promoting entrepreneurship and the development of SMEs/VSEs;
- defining and implementing missing sectoral strategies, for instance for tourism;
- improving protection of the environment and the management of natural resources (including water), in particular through implementation of the national green economy strategy and implementation of Tunisia's international commitments on climate change (determined national contribution), the blue economy and fishery resources;
- improving the competitiveness of traditional and growth sectors in industry and agriculture, in particular through support for innovation and ensuring sustainable resource management, and diversifying export markets;
- developing the energy sector, including electricity interconnections between the EU and Tunisia, and the promotion of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency;
- developing a safe, secure, sustainable and efficient transport system based on harmonised transport standards and an integrated multimodal network in order to facilitate south-south and north-south connections;
- consolidating the public finance management system through the adoption and implementation of a new organic budget law, reform of the state audit system and improving the governance of public enterprises. Implementing the reform of the tax system (simplification of the tax system, tax fairness, decentralisation, modernisation of the administration, fighting tax avoidance and implementation of relevant international commitments) represents a crucial step towards more inclusive development of the country. Support for the on-going banking reforms and the 2017-2021 national financial inclusion strategy concerning access, use and quality of services are also important;
- implementing the decentralisation process, with a view to developing public services and social infrastructure (in particular in the fields of education, culture, health, water and sanitation) to meet the needs of local communities; and accelerating the process of development of the regions in Tunisia's interior, a commitment shared by both parties to gradually reduce socioeconomic disparities.

To foster social progress, both parties undertake to continue to promote:

- employment, in particular through further reforms to ensure fair access to high quality education and vocational training in line with the needs of the labour market; in the framework of an active policy to improve opportunities for entering the labour market;
- an integrated and efficient Tunisian policy on social inclusion and effective social protection, in particular through strengthening the capacities of the relevant public bodies, supporting the reforms undertaken by Tunisia in the field of social cohesion, and implementing Article 67 of the EU-Tunisia Association Agreement on the coordination of social security schemes and guaranteed application of principles of fair treatment in social legislation; and
- inclusive social dialogue to enhance capacity to mitigate socioeconomic imbalances, reduce social tensions and promote real social peace – and thus also to improve the attractiveness of the country to foreign investors.

Both sides remain fully committed to the process of negotiations towards a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) and have agreed on a concrete action plan for 2018 to enable progress to be made with a view to accelerating the negotiations with a view to concluding them as soon as possible. The EU and Tunisia will continue to promote the modernisation of the Tunisian economy for the benefit of all, including the most disadvantaged regions and communities, and to boost job creation, particularly for young people. Both sides undertake to increase Tunisia's economic integration in the European market as well as in the Maghreb region.

In order to strengthen the role of innovation and research in economic, social and regional development, the EU and Tunisia will work on integrating Tunisia in the European Research Area, in particular by promoting higher education, strengthening governance, mechanisms for promoting public research and technology transfers between academia and industry.

2.2. Democracy, good governance and human rights

The EU and Tunisia will continue to attach particular importance to the process of democratic reform and the promotion of good governance and the rule of law, to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to the reinforcement of the role and participation of civil society. Both parties will continue to promote the process of political reforms through the effective implementation of the Constitution and of international commitments entered into by Tunisia.

Priority aspects in the areas of good governance and respect for the rule of law will include in particular:

- reinforcement of the institution of parliament and the creation and effective establishment of independent bodies;
- establishment of the Constitutional Court
- consolidation of a democratic, transparent and independent electoral process;
- the fight against corruption and fraud, inter alia, through support for the national authority for combating corruption;
- reform of the judicial system, including approximation to international standards including those of the Council of Europe;
- implementation of a strategy to reform and modernise public administration, comprising improvement of services at central and local level, the introduction of evidence-based decision-making, the simplification of administrative procedures and the development of digital administration;
- support for the process of decentralisation, including capacity-building and increasing the budgets of local administrations, in particular in the context of the municipal elections in May 2018; strengthening of civil society organisations, their role and their contribution to the decision-making process, and intensification of the participation of citizens, particularly of young people, in political life and the decision-making process.

Priority commitments relating to respect for and promotion of human rights will include:

- finalisation of the legislative harmonisation process in line with the Constitution and international standards, Tunisia's cooperation in multilateral fora and the implementation of the commitments made under the universal periodic review mechanism;
- support for efforts to combat all forms of discrimination, to combat torture (including the implementation of commitments made in the framework of the UN Committee Against Torture) and to protect people in vulnerable situations and to promote the rights of women, children and migrants;
- support for Tunisia's pioneering action to combat violence against women, to guarantee complete equality between men and women and to promote the role of women in all areas, especially in the economic and political spheres;
- the protection of freedom of expression and freedom of association;
- the right to the protection of personal data; and
- respect for human rights in the area of security.

2.3. Bringing peoples closer together, mobility and migration

Bringing Tunisian and European societies closer together by stepping up exchanges between peoples, societies and cultures is a key pillar of the privileged partnership. This mobility dimension is particularly important in the implementation of the partnership for youth. Effective implementation of Tunisia's association with Horizon 2020 and its participation in Creative Europe and Erasmus+ will be the cornerstones of these efforts.

The coordinated management of migration is a political priority for both Tunisia and the EU. Both sides will seek to improve dialogue and cooperation, in particular with the implementation of the Partnership for Mobility, consolidating the fight against root causes of irregular migration, and European willingness to support the implementation of a Tunisian asylum system. This cooperation, which will also reflect the regional dimension of these issues, will include:

- implementation of the Tunisian national strategy on migration; also covering asylum and international protection, and including implementation of an appropriate legislative framework;
- the completion of negotiations on readmission agreements and on visa facilitation;
- the good governance of legal migration through better coordination with EU Member States, while also respecting their national competences, including implementation of pilot mobility schemes and better integration of migrants in the host countries;
- supporting the mobilisation of Tunisians living abroad to invest in innovative sectors in Tunisia;
- support for the prevention of irregular migration by taking better account of migration issues in development strategies; this also entails enhanced border management and awareness campaigns on the risks of irregular migration;
- support for activities to prevent and combat migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, inter alia, through the detection and prosecution of criminal networks; and
- strengthening cooperation on returns and readmission, including through support for sustainable reintegration of Tunisian returnees.

2.4. Security and counter-terrorism

The EU and Tunisia face common security challenges that require both sides to take coordinated action, and they must proceed in line with the shared values of democracy and human rights.

Tunisia intends to implement its global and multisectoral strategy for combating terrorism and violent extremism. Priority areas for cooperation will include:

- implementing the national counter-terrorism strategy, in particular by reinforcing and modernising legislation and security and judicial institutions in line with the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution;
- speeding up the implementation of the programme to support the reform and modernisation of the security sector, including the accountability of security forces, and the deepening of this cooperation building on the progress already made;
- combating money laundering and the financing of organised crime and terrorism, including effectively implementing the action plan agreed with the Financial Action Task Force;
- developing a global policy for preventing radicalisation;
- the return of foreign fighters;
- the development of a policy of assistance and protection for victims of terrorism;
- the fight against organised crime, in particular against firearms trafficking and drugs;
- supporting implementation of the national strategy for the security of borders;
- strengthening cooperation with the relevant agencies of the European Union; and
- cooperation in the field of disaster risk management and prevention.

The European Union will also continue to participate fully in the G7 + 6 group that ensures coordination between Tunisia's main partners.

In addition, other areas of the partnership relating to security/defence could be further developed.

3. The way forward for strengthening the privileged partnership between the EU and Tunisia

The importance attached by both sides to their relationship will continue to be reflected in the intensity of political contacts and regular visits, as part of a broader political dialogue on all topics of mutual interest, including regional and global issues. The regional dimension of these discussions should be consolidated. Both sides are aware, in this respect, of the importance of their cooperation in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean. In addition to the existing dialogues, both sides will work together with a view to the organisation of high-level EU-Tunisia meetings and the participation of Tunisian ministers in informal meetings with members of the Council of the European Union on certain subjects. Both sides encourage parliamentary cooperation between the European Parliament and the Assembly of the Representatives of the People (*Assemblée des Représentants du Peuple*).

The bodies of the Association Agreement (Association Council, Association Committee and the technical sub-committees) will continue to be the preferred fora for effective implementation of the Partnership. The EU and Tunisia will seek to enhance the effectiveness and added value of their work and, as far as possible, to group this work according to the major priority themes in line with the strategic priorities.

To make the priorities listed above more tangible, a roadmap is to be proposed by Tunisia and approved by the EU. This public document will set out the most urgent measures (legislative, strategic and operational) necessary for the socioeconomic recovery of the country. This roadmap will be a flexible and operational mechanism for monitoring on a twice-yearly basis.

Under the Joint Communication, the EU undertook to significantly strengthen its financial support to Tunisia through the European Neighbourhood Instrument. The EU and Tunisia will seek to make maximum use of existing financial opportunities, including new instruments such as the EU External Investment Plan, making the most of complementarity and leverage effects between EU subsidies and loans provided by financial institutions. Both sides will seek to improve the synergy between political and sectoral dialogues, and the implementation of financial cooperation. They will also work towards strengthening mechanisms for coordination and dialogue with financial partners and international donors under the responsibility of the Tunisian side both as regards setting of priorities and their implementation.

Lastly, both sides undertake to give more visibility to the strategic relationship between the EU and Tunisia, and to promote the benefits of their cooperation among citizens on both sides of the Mediterranean.

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