

OBSERVATORY ON EUROPEAN DEFENCE

JULY-AUGUST 2016

In the spotlight

8-9 July

Warsaw Summit: focus on Eastern Europe, ISIS and Afghanistan

During the first day of the Warsaw Summit, NATO agreed to increase the military presence on eastern European borders by deploying four battalions in Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as by creating a new *ad hoc* force group along the Southeastern border. Furthermore, it has been announced the initial operational capability of NATO's Ballistic Missile Defence. During the second day of the Summit, Saturday 9 June, NATO member countries approved new training activities in Iraq and committed themselves to make available the NATO AWACS systems to the anti-ISIS coalition. Allies and partners contributing to NATO's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan confirmed to continue the mission beyond 2016 and assured funds for the Afghan forces until 2020. NATO leaders have also approved a "comprehensive" assistance package for Ukraine. In the sidelines of the Summit, NATO and the European Union have signed a joint declaration to strengthen the cooperation in the field of maritime security and the response to hybrid threats.

1 July

EU extends sanctions against Russia for another six months

The European Council has extended economic sanctions against Russia until 31 January 2017. The decision has followed the lack of full implementation of the Minsk agreements by Russia. These measures were introduced on 31 July 2014.

20 and 26 July, 4 and 30 August

New heads of EU missions

On 20 July, the Greek Ambassador Alexandra Papadopoulou has been appointed head of the EU mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo). On 26 July, the Finnish ambassador Kirsi Henriksson and the Romanian police officer Maria-Cristina Stepanescu have been appointed, respectively, head of EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Nestor. On 4 August, the Bulgarian Natalya Apostolova has been named as the new EU Special Representative in Kosovo. Finally, on 30 August, the Italian police officer Vincenzo Tagliaferri has been appointed head of the EU mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya).

27 July

New Director General of the NATO International Military Staff

The Dutch Lieutenant General Jan Broeks took over the position of Director General of the NATO International Military Staff (IMS). The IMS is the executive body of the Military Committee, NATO's senior military authority. Broeks was elected by the NATO Chiefs of Defence in September 2015 and will serve a term of three years.

5 August

EU election observation mission in Jordan

The EU High Representative Federica Mogherini announced that an EU Election observation mission will observe the Jordanian Parliamentary elections that will take place on 20 September. The mission is led by the German MEP Jo Leinen. A first group of experts arrived in Amman on 13 August.

24 August

NATO: US, Bulgaria to conduct joint air patrols

Upon request of the Bulgarian authorities, NATO has decided that US Air Force and Bulgarian Air

Force will conduct joint air patrols in the Bulgarian skies starting on 9 September. Two US F-15 will join Bulgarian Mig-29s to surveil the Bulgarian airspace.

30 August

New tasks for EUNAVFOR Med Sophia

Following the Council's approval on 20 June, the EU Political and Security Committee has authorised EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia to begin two new tasks (training of the Libyan coastguards and navy and countering illegal arms trafficking). The mission, launched in June 2015, has so far contributed to the arrest and transfer to the Italian authorities of 87 suspected migrant smugglers and traffickers, as well as to the neutralisation of 255 vessels. Furthermore, it has helped to save more than 22,000 migrants and supported other organisations in the rescue of over 36,000 persons.

31 August

France and Germany take over protection of the Baltic skies

For the 42nd rotation of the NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission, France and Germany took over from UK and Portugal. France will lead the mission until the end of the year, with four Mirage jets based at Šiauliai in Lithuania. Germany will provide four Eurofighter Typhoon, which will fly out of Ämari airbase in Estonia.

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