

## European Council 15 December 2016 in Brussels

The European Council will start at 12.30 on Thursday 15 December. It will begin with the usual exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament.

This will be followed by a working lunch. First Prime Minister Fico, representing the Slovak Presidency of the Council, is expected to update his colleagues on progress made in the Council on the **implementation of decisions taken at the European Council** as well as priorities contained in the Bratislava roadmap. Leaders will then turn to **migration**. They are likely to focus their debate on the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement and the partnership frameworks with African countries. Also during lunch, the heads of state or government are expected to discuss the ratification process of the **Ukraine AA/DCFTA** and receive an update on the state of play as regards the implementation of the Minsk Agreements and the situation in **Syria**. Cypriot President Anastasiades will inform about the reunification talks held with Turkey.

The afternoon working session will start with an exchange of views with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on EU-NATO cooperation. The EU leaders will then discuss both the **internal and external aspects of European security**, before turning to the **economic, social and youth** related issues on the agenda. President Draghi is expected to brief the European Council on the state of the economy.

The European Council will be followed by an informal working dinner of the 27 leaders. The objective of which is to set out how the **Brexit process** will be handled by the EU 27 once the UK has notified its intention to leave the EU.

### Indicative programme:

- Thursday:
- 12.30 Exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament
  - 13.15 Working lunch
  - 15.15 Working session
  - +/- 18.30 Press conference by Presidents Tusk and Juncker together with Slovak Prime Minister Fico.
  - 19.30 Informal working dinner of the 27 heads of state or government

### [European Council 15 December 2016](#)

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<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

## **Implementation of previous decisions**

In line with the new working methods which put more emphasis on implementation and follow-up to previous decisions, Prime Minister Fico is expected to report to his colleagues on progress made in the Council. This will be the second occasion for leaders to reflect on results stemming from the Bratislava roadmap and previous European Councils, which include the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on climate, the launch of the European Border and Coast Guard, including the rapid reaction pool, the agreement in the Council on the extension of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the modernisation of the trade defence instruments, reinforced EU-NATO cooperation and the revised Schengen Border Code, allowing for systematic checks at EU external borders.

[Reflection on the EU's future](#)

[Bratislava Declaration and Roadmap](#)

## **Migration**

The European Council will review the EU's comprehensive migration policy and take stock of the substantive progress achieved since the height of the crisis in autumn 2015. The debate is expected to focus on the external aspects of migration.

On cooperation with Turkey the leaders are expected to assess and reaffirm their commitment to all aspects of the statement agreed on 18 March 2016. The European Council should also renew its pledge to continue to support the countries along the Western Balkans route.

The heads of state or government are expected to assess progress made on the partnership frameworks with Mali, Senegal, Niger, Nigeria and Ethiopia. The objective is to tackle the root causes of migration, and to provide practical support to the countries concerned to help them prevent illegal migration and improve return rates. The European Council will furthermore address financing mechanisms for the implementation of these compacts and the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan, agreed in November 2015. Leaders are also likely to highlight the need for continued support for the Libyan coastguard in order to increase its capacity to prevent loss of life at sea and break the business model of smugglers.

Taking note of progress made and building on areas of convergence, the European Council is expected to call for work to be continued on the reform of the Common European Asylum System, including on how to apply the principles of solidarity and responsibility in the future.

[EU response to migratory pressures](#)

[EU Turkey statement 18 March 2016](#)

[Valletta summit on migration 11-12 November 2015](#)

## **Ukraine**

The heads of state or government will address the issue of the ratification in the Netherlands of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement / Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Leaders will aim to find a solution, without modifying the agreement with Ukraine, that would pave the way for it to be ratified also by the Netherlands, while fully respecting the outcome of the Dutch referendum of 6 April 2016. Leaders are also expected to receive an update from President Hollande and Chancellor Merkel on the implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

[EU relations with Ukraine](#)

## **Syria**

The European Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Syria, strongly condemning the continued assault on Aleppo by the Syrian regime and its allies. It will call for immediate cessation of hostilities and unconditional access for the UN to deliver humanitarian assistance. Leaders are expected to call for those responsible for breaches of international law to be held accountable, while underlining that the EU stands ready to consider all available options.

[EU statement on the situation in Aleppo](#)

## **Security**

The European Council will review progress and set objectives for a number of internal security measures proposed in the light of the migration crisis and the fight against terrorism. In particular, leaders will welcome the agreement on the revised Schengen Borders Code, allowing for systematic checks on all travellers crossing an EU external border. They should also call for agreement to be reached during 2017 on the so-called Entry/Exit system and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). Leaders will further call for the swift adoption of the Counter-Terrorism Directive, the proposals on firearms and anti-money laundering.

[Schengen Borders Code: agreement to reinforce checks at external borders](#)

[Fight against terrorism](#)

[Strengthening external borders](#)

In the area of external security and defence the European Council is expected to call for Europeans to take greater responsibility for their own security, including by increasing resources. Leaders will call for the strengthening of EU internal cooperation on external security, mainly through the various initiatives contained in the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence. They should also welcome the recent proposals on the European Defence Action Plan and invite the Commission to make proposals for the establishment of a European Defence Fund. The European Council will call for the swift implementation of all the 42 concrete measures in the 7 designated areas agreed between EU and NATO, in particular as regards hybrid threats, maritime security, exercises, strategic communication and capabilities development. NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg will take part in the beginning of this session to exchange views on EU-NATO cooperation.

[Security and defence](#)

[Op-ed by Tusk, Juncker and Stoltenberg](#)

## **Economy, social development and youth**

The European Council is expected to reiterate the importance of the various Single Market strategies, including the Energy Union, and call for their completion and implementation by 2018. In particular it is expected to call for an increased level of ambition in the areas of services and digital.

Leaders will welcome the agreement reached in the Council on the extension of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) as well as the increased support for the Youth Employment Initiative. The European Council is also expected to call for the continuation of the Youth Guarantee and work to be advanced on recent Commission initiatives dedicated to youth, including on mobility and skills development.

The President of the European Central Bank Mario Draghi is invited to this session to give an update on the state of the economy.

[Investment plan for Europe: EFSI extension agreed by Council](#)

[Single market strategy for goods and services](#)

[Digital single market for Europe](#)

[Youth employment](#)

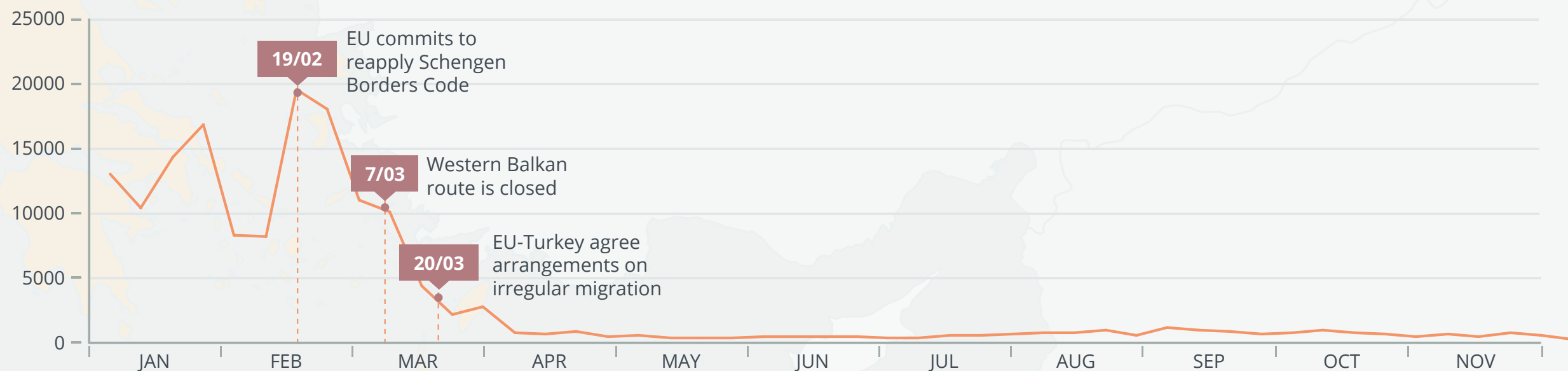
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# Migration flows: Irregular arrivals in Greece

## Irregular arrivals in Greece per week

Border crossing by sea from January to November 2016



Source: UNHCR



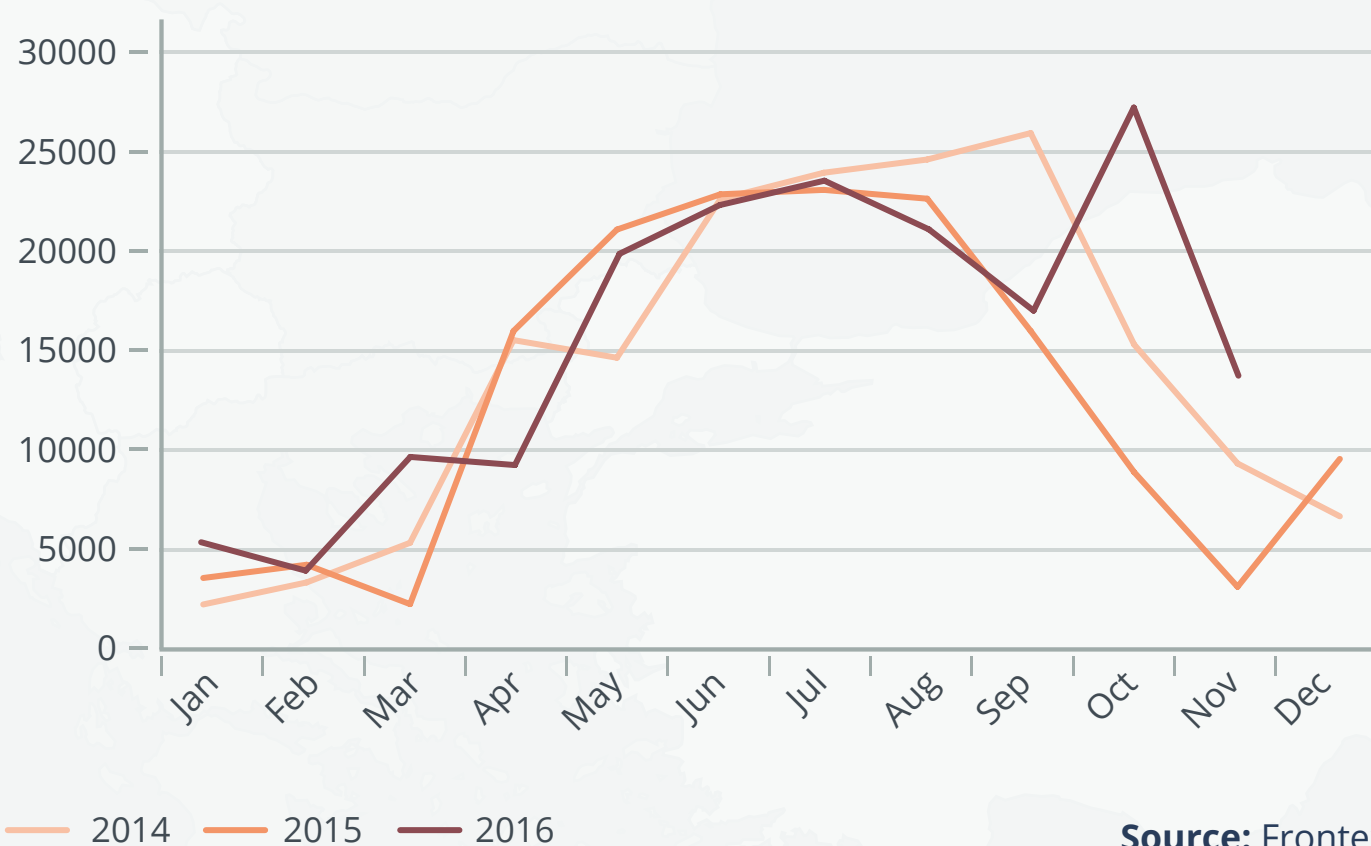
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General Secretariat

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# Migration flows: Irregular arrivals in Italy

## Irregular arrivals in Italy per month

Border crossing by sea, from January 2014 to November 2016



Source: Frontex

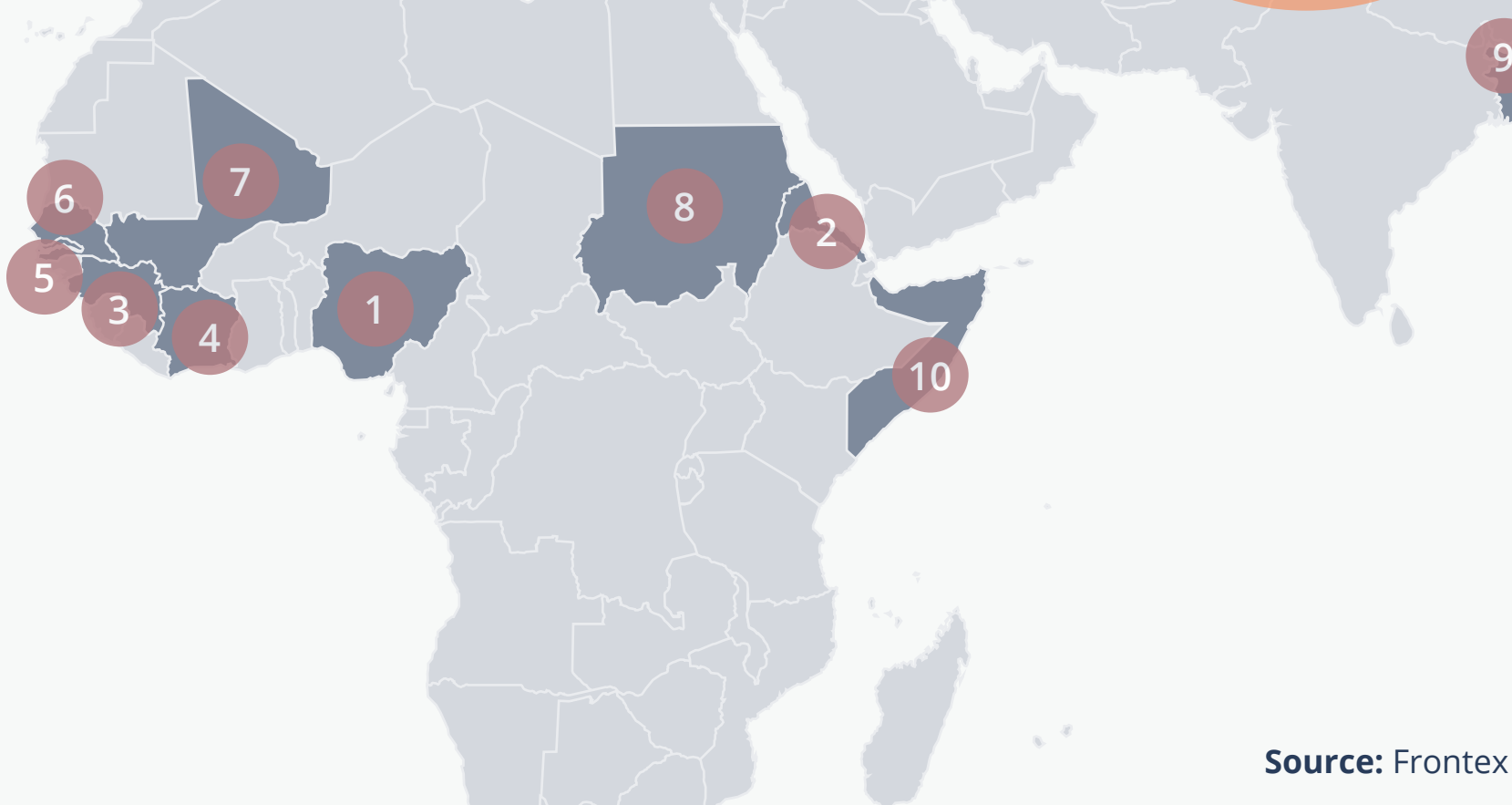
## Irregular arrivals in Italy per country of origin

Top nationalities, January - November 2016

Number and % of total arrivals

- 1 Nigeria - 21% (35 996)
- 2 Eritrea - 12% (20 002)
- 3 Guinea - 7% (12 550)
- 4 Cote d'Ivoire - 7% (11 425)
- 5 Gambia - 6% (11 138)
- 6 Senegal - 6% (9 548)
- 7 Mali - 5% (9 305)
- 8 Sudan - 5% (9 219)
- 9 Bangladesh - 4% (7 456)
- 10 Somalia - 4% (7 065)

**173 044**  
total arrivals



Source: Frontex





# EU Mediterranean operations: over 110 000 lives saved in 2016

3 EU operations are patrolling the Mediterranean to secure EU borders, target migrant smugglers and rescue migrants at risk

## Operation Triton

- » Frontex border surveillance operation
- » Central Mediterranean
- » Launched 2014

## EU NAVFOR Med Operation Sophia

- » CSDP military operation to target migrant smugglers
- » Southern Central Mediterranean
- » Launched 2015
- » October 2016 - Training of the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and Libyan Navy

## Operation Poseidon

- » Frontex border surveillance operation
- » Eastern Mediterranean
- » Launched 2006

total saved

**110 532**

dead and missing

**4 699**



**48 405**  
rescued



**21 714**  
rescued



**40 413**  
rescued

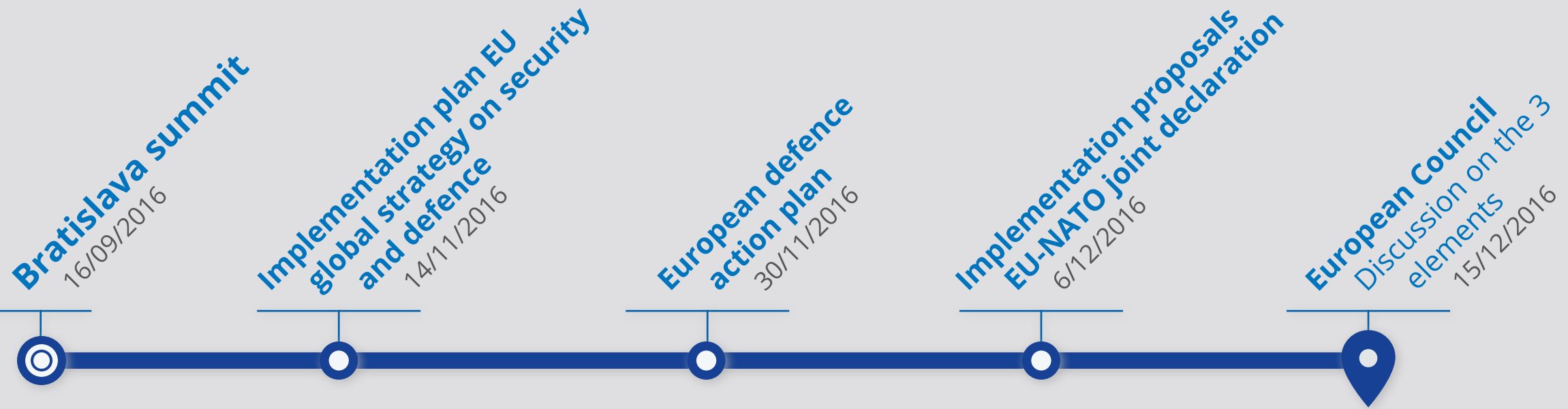
Sources: Frontex, EU NAVFOR Med, UNHCR  
These figures correspond to the period 1 January 2016 - 30 November 2016.  
Figures refer to EU co-ordinated rescue operations only.



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# Delivering on EU security and defence



## EU Global strategy: Implementation plan on security and defence



respond to external conflicts and crises

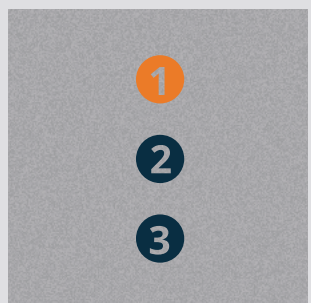


build capacities of partners

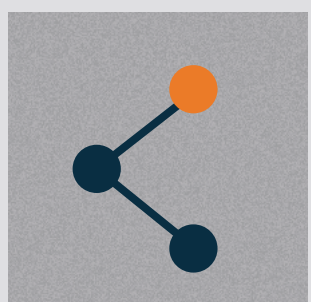


protect EU and its citizens

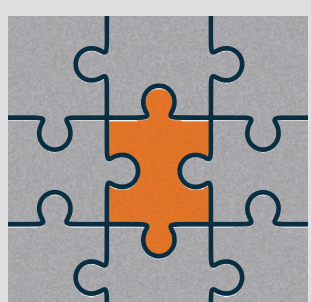
## Proposed actions



set capability development priorities



deepen cooperation among member states



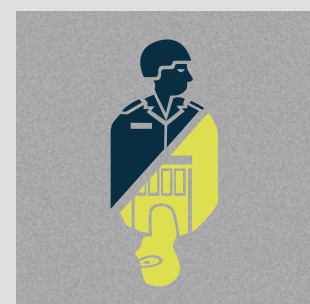
adjust structures, tools and instruments



take forward partnerships

## EU-NATO joint declaration: implementation

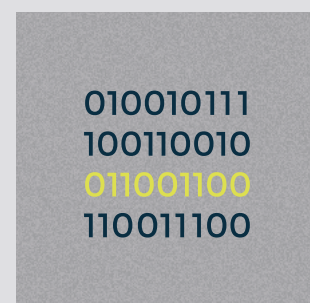
### 40+ proposals 7 areas



hybrid threats



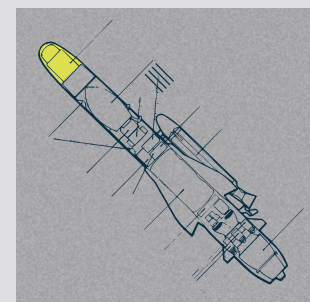
operational cooperation, including maritime issues



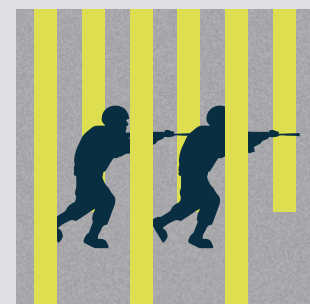
cyber security



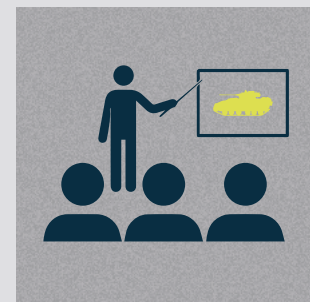
defence capabilities



industry and research



exercises



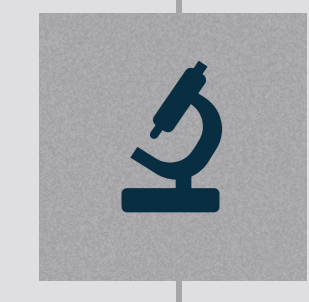
capacity building

## European defence action plan

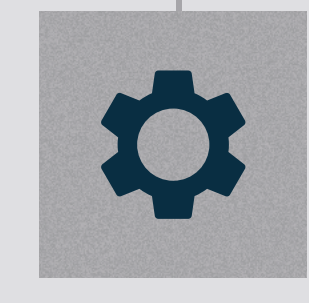
### European Commission proposal



launch a European Defence Fund with



a research window



a capability window



foster investments in defence supply chains



strengthen the single market for defence