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EU – Republic of Korea Security and Defence Partnership

[Preface]

1. The European Union (EU) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) face an increasingly challenging security environment. Europe and the Indo-Pacific are highly interconnected and interdependent, in geo-political, economic, and security dimensions. Security is not limited to traditional military and defence-related issues, but increasingly encompasses a broader range of closely linked areas, ranging from the cyber and hybrid spheres to maritime and outer space.
2. The partnership between the EU and the ROK is based on shared universal values and interests and driven by a strong recognition of the need to uphold the international rules-based order and the rule of law based on international law and the respect for the United Nations (UN) Charter.
3. The EU-ROK Summit (Seoul, 22 May 2023) Joint Statement recognised the threats to global peace and security, notably Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear and missile programmes. The Summit called to develop a security partnership and establish a Strategic Dialogue at Foreign Ministerial level to enhance our cooperation on global peace and security. It highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation for Peace and Stability in areas such as disarmament, non-proliferation, maritime security, counterterrorism and prevention of violent extremism, cybersecurity, foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI).
4. The EU and the ROK have adopted important strategic documents that will guide their respective foreign, security and defence policies for the years to come. The EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and the EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence set out a clear vision for a more robust EU role in security and defence, with strong tailored partnerships at its core. The ROK published its Strategy for a Free, Peaceful and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region and its National Security Strategy. These overarching documents confirm the strong strategic convergence and need for enhanced cooperation between the EU and the ROK.

5. In this context, both the EU and the ROK seek to seize the momentum to further intensify cooperation to better meet shared challenges. The EU and the ROK will develop and strengthen dialogue and cooperation across the whole range of security and defence topics, making use of existing frameworks, notably the EU-ROK Framework Agreement, but also the Framework Participation Agreement in EU crisis management operations.

General Framework

6. The EU and the ROK have decided to establish and implement a tailor-made, mutually beneficial partnership that will frame bilateral cooperation across the security and defence spectrum. This Security and Defence Partnership will be underpinned by a series of dialogue and consultation mechanisms to provide steering and oversight:
 - a. Making use of the annual EU-ROK Strategic Dialogue at ministerial level (Foreign Minister with High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission) to ensure the oversight of the security and defence relationship and provide guidance as appropriate. Security and defence-related issues will be a key component of the agenda.
 - b. Upgrading the existing regular Security and Defence Consultations to an annual ROK-EU Security and Defence Dialogue at ROK Director-General (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of National Defence) / EU Managing Director level, to discuss the broad strategic environment, thematic security and defence issues, to explore further cooperation and to prepare outcomes for ministerial level meetings.
 - c. Building on and continuing existing thematic structured dialogues on specific domains of shared interest, including assessments of the security landscape and threats in the Indo-Pacific and launching annual Indo-Pacific consultations to coordinate respective approaches to the Indo-Pacific. These will report to and inform the annual Security and Defence Dialogue.
7. The EU and the ROK will explore the possibility of concluding an EU - ROK Agreement on the Security of Information, as well as the establishment of a secure communication connection.

8. The EU and the ROK will further develop their cooperation on security and defence, including exploring opportunities for cooperation on capacity building and support to other partners, using their respective programmes in security and defence, such as the EU-funded Critical Maritime Routes Indian Ocean (CRIMARIO), and Enhancing Security In and With Asia (ESIWA).
9. The EU and the ROK will promote multilateral dialogue and cooperation among the ROK, the EU, and like-minded countries in relevant areas where considered mutually beneficial, including possibly through joint exercises.

Areas of Cooperation

10. In addition to exchanging on respective developments in security and defence matters and relevant regional security and geopolitical issues, the EU and the ROK will expand cooperation in areas such as:

International peace and crisis management, including peacekeeping operations and CSDP

(Common Security and Defence Policy) missions and operations

11. The EU and the ROK will strengthen their cooperation in the field of security and defence crisis management. The ROK will continue and expand its participation in the EU CSDP civilian and military missions and operations, making full use of its Framework Participation Agreement with the EU.
12. The EU and the ROK will exchange on respective contributions and support to UN peacekeeping operations.

Maritime Security, including operations, exercises and capacity-building for third countries

13. The EU and the ROK will deepen exchanges on maritime security, aiming at promoting an open and rules-based maritime regional security architecture, including secure sea lines of communication and freedoms of navigation and overflight, in accordance with international law, in particular United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
14. The EU and the ROK will establish a regular maritime security dialogue (at Director / Head of Division level) to deepen mutual understanding and enhance cooperation in areas such as:
 - a. Operational cooperation, based on the Framework Participation Agreement in EU crisis management operations and building on the successful cooperation between Operation Atalanta and the ROK Navy off the Horn of Africa, further promoting concrete naval cooperation.
 - b. Developing cooperation on maritime security through activities such as joint exercises and port calls, including with the participation of mutually agreed third countries, on a case by case basis.
 - c. Exploring cooperation in the framework of the EU's Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP) initiative, notably in the North West Indian Ocean.
 - d. Exploring possible cooperation on maritime capacity building of third states in the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia and the Pacific region, including in the framework of the EU Critical Maritime Routes Indo-Pacific (CRIMARIO) and Enhancing Security In and With Asia (ESIWA) projects.

Cyber issues

15. The EU and the ROK will deepen the existing EU-ROK Cyber Policy Consultation, including by enhancing regular exchanges on the cyber security threat landscape, respective policy frameworks and practical cooperation to coordinate diplomatic responses to malicious cyber activities, as well as coordination of cyber capacity building efforts.

16. The EU and the ROK will continue to coordinate and cooperate at multilateral, regional and bilateral levels, notably on the promotion of the UN framework of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace and the establishment of a UN Cyber Programme of Action to this end, including on countering the DPRK's illicit cyber activities that fund its unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programs, as well as on the development and implementation of cyber confidence building measures in the ASEAN Regional Forum, notably on the protection of critical infrastructure.

Countering Hybrid threats

17. Through the annual EU-ROK Security and Defence Dialogue, the EU and the ROK will discuss hybrid threats, encompassing issues related to cyber-security, FIMI, global aspects of economic security and others as appropriate.
18. The EU and the ROK will deepen their cooperation on research and analyses on hybrid threats, including by supporting close cooperation between academic institutions, think tanks, as well as through centres of excellence on both sides.
19. The EU and the ROK will increase the sharing of best practices in developing strategies and policies, including diplomatic responses to hybrid threats, and will increase cross-participation in exercises as appropriate.
20. The EU and the ROK will coordinate possible diplomatic responses to hybrid threats.

Strategic Communications and countering Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI)

21. The EU and the ROK will keep developing ongoing bilateral exchanges on FIMI and expand towards more structured, operational cooperation.
22. The EU and the ROK will proactively share information on threats assessments in the disinformation domain.

Approaches to resilience of critical infrastructure

23. The EU and the ROK will exchange on approaches and development of policies with respect to strengthening the resilience of critical infrastructure.

Counterterrorism (CT), preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE)

24. The EU and the ROK will explore the potential for cooperation on CT related matters by designing activities for greater interaction between CT-P/CVE entities, such as addressing the online dimension of radicalisation and the dissemination of terrorist content online, the misuse of new and emerging technologies for terrorism and countering terrorist financing, or the community policing approach to countering violent extremism.
25. The EU and the ROK will promote coordination in multilateral and regional fora.

Non-Proliferation, Disarmament, conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons (SALW)

26. The EU and the ROK will deepen consultations on arms control and disarmament, non-proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction, and the international transfer of conventional weapons, as well as in the area of responsible AI in the military domain.
27. The EU and the ROK will promote shared awareness on key issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation.
28. The EU and the ROK will promote coordination in the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and other key multilateral instruments, as well as export control regimes.
29. The EU and the ROK will encourage enhanced dialogue among nuclear-weapon states towards future possible nuclear arms control framework.

Space security and defence

30. The EU and the ROK will explore cooperation in areas of space security with the aim to ensure a safe, secure, and sustainable space, including by launching a dedicated Dialogue on Space Security.
31. The EU and the ROK will promote coordination of external engagement in multilateral (including at the United Nations) and bilateral fora, notably to jointly promote norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour in outer space.

Training and education in security and defence

32. The EU and the ROK will explore cooperation in the field of training and education related to CSDP and crisis management, including developing cooperation with the European Security and Defence College (ESDC).

EU and the ROK defence initiatives, including exchange of information on defence industrial related matters

33. The EU and the ROK will discuss respective defence initiatives, including exchanging information on defence industry-related matters.

Peace mediation and conflict prevention

34. The EU and the ROK will explore cooperation on peace mediation and conflict prevention, including cooperation in the field of CSDP, joint support to third states, sharing of best practices, joint training, among others.
35. The EU and the ROK will enhance their coordination on shared priorities in peace and conflict prevention in multilateral fora, notably in the UN context.

External aspects of economic security

36. The EU and the ROK will explore ways to cooperate on the global aspects of their respective economic security policies related to security and defence, with the aim to address the risks that both face, while maintaining and improving a well-functioning international rules-based system to continue to benefit from an open economy.

External aspects of human trafficking and transnational organised crime

37. The EU and the ROK will explore opportunities for cooperation in the external dimension of human trafficking and in the fight against transnational organised crime.

Women, Peace and Security[^]

38. The EU and the ROK are committed to the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which consists of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and its follow-up resolutions, and will ensure that gender equality is integrated in their areas of cooperation on security and defence.
39. The EU and ROK will exchange good practices on implementing WPS commitments, and continue close collaboration to ensure gender equality as a political and security related priority with an aim to reinforce joint responses to current and emerging security and geopolitical shifts.

Way Forward

40. The areas identified in the Security and Defence Partnership will be reviewed regularly in the framework of the upgraded ROK-EU Security and Defence Dialogue (ROK Director-General (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of National Defence)/EU Managing Director level), which will take stock of progress made, give further impetus, and report to the annual ROK-EU Strategic Dialogue meeting at ministerial level, as well as to the Summit, with a view to exploring ways to further strengthen and develop the cooperation.

41. The content of the Security and Defence Partnership will be reviewed as appropriate.

(End)